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**hobo guide
to**

GOOGLE SEO

V1 2009

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Google SEO - Search Engine Optimisation Basics

Over 50,000 people every month visit this site to learn more about SEO.

If you want to hire expert seo services for your company - [Contact Us Today](#)



Introduction - Search engine optimisation is many things, it's an art and it's a science. SEO creative and it's technical. It's logical, parasitic and opportunistic. The aim of seo is to maximise targeted types of valuable traffic to a website from search engines by improving the visibility of said website in Google organic or unpaid [SERPS](#). Traditionally, this has meant aiming for no1 or top ten positions in Google but SEO has evolved and now a SEO needs to be more a marketer than just a tech geek. A seo needs to be concerned, not just with high positions in Google for relevant keywords, but with analysing competition, traffic and analytics, and converting traffic to leads and sales. I like to draw a line between SEO and Linkbuilding. One (SEO) is on-page (on-site), the other, off-site (Linkbuilding).

SEO is not gaming Google (for us anyway). It's about trying to understand how and why Google engineers want to rank pages above others. SEO is about optimising a site to give Google what it wants, and at the same time, meeting the requirements, the intent, of a specific search engine visitor i.e. to buy something, to learn something, to store something, to communicate with someone.

This guide is aimed at beginners who want a start point for learning the basics of Google SEO without being suckered into buying regurgitated SEO EBooks not worth the bandwidth to download never mind pay for. Google changes how it works, slightly, every day. You never know *which* Google DC you are seeing. Nobody knows exactly how Google works. But the principles of SEO are pretty longstanding.

In the end, Google success comes down to quality links from real websites, good content, and good syndication networks be they automated or human. SEO is not free. It can take weeks and even months or years to see the fruit of your labour. And there are no guarantees with SEO. It is however potentially the most rewarding online marketing effort you can make for your business.

This SEO guide to Google is an ongoing project - I thought it would be a useful edition to the site. I'll be adding links to relevant seo related websites often. [Contact me here \(email link\)](#) if you want to contribute to improve the page. Subscribe to the Hobo feed to [learn about new stuff](#). A lot of this is my honest personal opinion about SEO or it wouldn't be here so clearly no warranties. Test everything you read.... yourself. Every site is a different set of circumstances. You don't stop learning SEO. Google Ranking factors change over time.

Remember – **Deployment is the ART of SEO!**

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- **Created in July 2009** by Shaun Anderson
- **Warranties** – Absolutely 100% None – This whole publication is opinion, speculation and possibly, out of date already. Supplied as is, and references posts on the Hobo SEO Blog as well as other notable and generally reliable sources.

Shaun Anderson

Shaun Anderson is the Web Marketing Director and Lead SEO at Hobo Web LTD, one of Scotland's and the UK's best seo companies. An obsessive passion for on-site SEO, linkbuilding and web accessibility, Shaun has worked on hundreds of websites, in every kind of market.

Shaun started working in an advertising agency in 1999, instrumental in the founding of a dedicated website design division of the agency, in 2001/2, and co-founded Hobo Web LTD, a specialist seo and website design company based in Greenock, Scotland, on April 01, 2006.



Throughout his career Shaun has been involved in website design and search engine marketing projects for universities, colleges, charities, corporate, small business and sme, finance sites, well known UK brands, cathedrals and the NHS - to name but a few.

Google Guidelines

- Always Consider [Google Guidelines](#)
- Google Guidelines change from time to time
- Onsite, be squeaky clean with SEO!
- Don't hide text or links, don't keyword stuff
- Don't Game Google too much, Give it what it wants
- You're not smart enough to Game Google
- Remember every algorithm was an idea first
- Think like a Google engineer, what are they trying to achieve? And why?
- Consider [Google SEO Starter Guide](#)
- Google webmaster guidelines can be interpreted differently but ignore search engine SEO guidelines at your own peril

Getting Into Google Free

- Getting free placement in Google is easy - you don't need any kind of software
- All you need is a link from another website to your website
- Google needs to understand it is a full link to include you in its database (index) of websites
- You can [submit your site to Google](#), but I think it is pointless - I have never used this method
- Some seo companies charge for 'submission' to Google and other search engines - I wouldn't bother
- Be wary - SEO can be a mysterious business - ensure you do not get scammed by unethical seo firms

Domain Authority

- Domain authority is among the most important ranking factors in SEO
- To rank in Google for a keyword your site needs to have [online business or domain authority](#)
- Other **real** websites need to link to your website
- You can't fake authority, but you can [grow Google authority](#) over time
- The BBC for instance could rank in the top ten for anything - a new site cannot!
- Consider this [SEOMoz video on Authority](#)

Related Articles

Google Trusts Domain Online Business Authority

So Google calls it *online business authority*?

Basically, you have a 'popular' site **a lot of other sites link to**. Perhaps a site which has a lot of links from other online business authorities too. An OBA usually has a decent amount of traffic too. This is what Google calls it anyways.

Amazon has a lot of online business authority.... ([Official Google Webmaster Blog](#))

SEO more usually talk about [domain trust and domain authority](#) based on the number, type and quality of incoming links to a site.

Examples of trusted, authority domains include Wikipedia, the W3C and Apple. How do you become an OBA? Through a killer brand or service, usually a lot of useful content on your site and through telling a lot of people about the excellent content on your site.

How do you take advantage of being an online business authority? Either you turn the site into a [SEO Black Hole](#) (only for the very biggest brands) or you pump out information – like all the time. On any subject.

Can you (on a smaller scale in certain niches) mimic an online business authority by recognising what OBAs do for Google, and why Google ranks these high in search result? These provide THE service, THE content, THE experience. This takes a lot of work and a lot of time to create, or even mimic.

In fact, as a [SEO](#), I honestly think **the content route** is the only sustainable way for a most businesses to try to achieve OBA at least in their niche or locale. I concede a little [ninja linkbuilding](#) goes a long way to help, and you have certainly got to get out there and tell others about your site...

Have other relevant sites link to yours. [Google Webmaster Guidelines](#)

Original Content

- Original content is something you create yourself, write and express yourself, and is not present in that form anywhere else on the internet
- Original content is generally rewarded by Google with fast indexing and good stable rankings usually above copies of that content.
- Popular timely content can quickly find its way to the top of Google especially if it has been promoted well or gained traction in Google friendly social media sites like Digg or Mixx.
- Make no mistake - content is the future of SEO and its here already and only going to get more important.
- Consider Chris Garrett's [Flagship content](#).

Google Pagerank

- [Google Pagerank](#) is one metric Google uses to rank pages in its index
- IMO You only need a lot of pagerank if you have a lot of pages - Consider this on [Google PR](#)
- Having a high pagerank page is pointless unless you are spreading that Google PR to other pages on your site via internal links
- It's thought Google Pagerank is a deciding measurement that allows pages to rank in Google's main index.
- Pages without Google PR may end up in obscure, hidden supplemental results
- 'In The Wild' A High PR page alone will not necessarily outperform a low PR page

Related Articles

[Google PageRank Update 2009, 2008 & 2007](#)

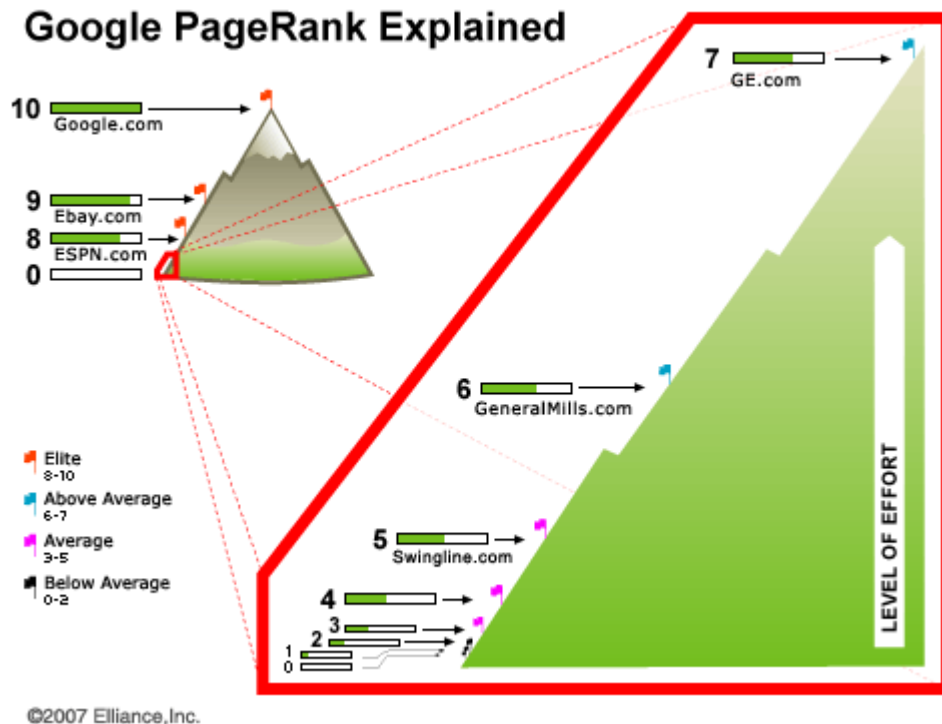
When will Google next update Pagerank? [Subscribe](#) and you'll be among the first to know —
——>

Recent Google Pagerank Update confirmations

- ***Last Confirmed*** Network Wide 27/28 May 2009 – [Google PR Update?](#) (Followed by what looked like an Internal PR update in June 2009)
- *Confirmed* – [1 / 2 April 2009](#) – [Google Pagerank Update 2009](#)
- *Confirmed* – [30-31 December 2008](#)
- *Confirmed* – 27 September 2008
- *Confirmed* – 26 July 2008
- *Confirmed* – 29 April 2008
- *Confirmed* – 9,10,11,12 January 2008
- *Confirmed* – 26 October 2007
- *Confirmed* – 28 April 2007

It's clear there has been another Google Page Rank Update over the last few days, with pages on the [Hobo](#) site being updated. The cut – off for the last pages to acquire Page Rank seems to be the last week in December 2007. I don't normally agree a PR update is in progress until I see it on sites I monitor – and it is clearly visible.

I certainly don't give two hoots about *Toolbar* Google PR these days, and neither should you, either. It's 'an indication' of the quality of a site some time ago, but there are better indicators.



Graphic by [Elliance](#), an eMarketing firm specialising in results-driven search engine marketing, website design, and outbound eMarketing campaigns. First sourced at [Search Engine Land](#)

What Is My Pagerank?

Well, it depends. On which DC (data centre). During an update it takes time for Google to roll out Page Rank. That's why I prefer to use an online tool that will query [multiple DC](#) at the same time.

Google Page Rank FAQs Jan 2007

1. The fast way to lose PR is to openly sell links on your website. This is now officially against [Google Webmaster Guidelines](#) for inclusion.
2. At the moment, the only tangible effect when Google penalizes a site is a reduction of visible Toolbar PR. Many sites that openly manipulated Google SERPS via paid revue blogging and link-selling had their Google PR dramatically reduced in the last quarter of 2007 in Google's opening salvo in the "[war on paid links](#)", or so Google would have us believe.
3. Toolbar PR has little or no effect on amount of visitors Google will send you – believe me. Perhaps this is why bloggers who had PR devalued reported no loss of visitors from Google.
4. Many believe Google can't find all paid links, and are using the Google Toolbar to spread FUD,

5. If you install the Google Toolbar you will see a **green indicator** in your Internet Explorer / Firefox toolbar showing you the Google Page Rank of the page. Hovering over the green bar will give you a number which is the page's Google Page Rank.
6. It's accepted that the Green Toolbar Version of Page Rank is more than **a few months out of date**.
7. Google Toolbar / DC PR is **not an accurate representation** of your current Real Page Rank and now that Google openly manipulates what you see, the integrity of the toolbar PR is very questionable indeed.
8. Think of Google Toolbar PR as 'an indication of the PR of what your site might have been last month'.
9. To get a higher Page Rank for your domain, you need to get a lot of other pages with PR to link to you. I used [an analogy](#) to visualize Google PR, and used this same Google Heat analogy to get a PR 7 site until PR was apparently reduced within the SEO community, and this site fell to PR 5.
10. Page Rank **flows**, and so can be manipulated, channelled, blocked (with NoFollow) and screwed up. My Google Heat article explains how you can channel PR around a site. Just substitute "[Heat](#)" for "PR".
11. Remember sites don't have Google Page Rank, pages do. That's why it's possible for an internal page to have a higher PR than the home page. The way a page gets Google Page Rank is from links to it and that's the only way of improving Google Page Rank. IBLs (incoming backlinks) from high Google Page Rank pages can give you more Google Page Rank "Juice" than links from low Google Page Rank pages. There is one other factor at play. The Google Page Rank they "give" is spread over the number of outgoing links on the pages. You may get more Google Page Rank benefit from a Google Page Rank 3 page with only two outbound links than a Google Page Rank 7 page with hundreds of outbound links.
12. Google looks to be rolling out PR changes month to month recently. One thing you can be sure of: When Google revises Google Page Rank the fastest way to discover it is at [Digital Point](#).
13. I've seen sites go from anywhere from PR 0 to PR 7 in one update.
14. One still useful aspect of PR is that when an update happens you can use Toolbar PR to monitor how effectively you have spread potential Google Juice or Google Heat through site architecture.

The Most Important Thing To Understand!

Pagerank is about whether you are in Google's main index, or not in. It's as simple as that. A high PR won't rank about a low PR page just on PR. The only good thing about a lot of Google Pagerank is you can get a lot more pages into Google – that's it. It does not **improve** rank – it only allows a page to rank.

"Edit - Google Toolbar is now only weeks out of Sync with Real PR. (@2 Weeks in recent updates)" (as at 01/07/09)

Surefire Ways To Increase Google Pagerank (PR)

There seems to be a Google Toolbar Pagerank update underway. Instead of the normal announcement, I thought I'd list what I think Google PR is actually good for because for most, it's totally useless information. Oh, and of course, how to increase your PR if you won't be persuaded otherwise.

For the purposes of this quick article I'm very much muddying the line between Toolbar and REAL PR – two different, unsynchronised mechanisms as I understand them.

What follows is obviously my opinion based on observations I've made. Years ago I used to manipulate PR quite effectively, now I don't even bother.

First - **I think you only need a high Google PR if you have a LOT of pages.** Otherwise, a high PR alone is quite useless. I still think [PR may be a defining entry level requirement](#) for pages to get into Google's main, competitive results, but that's it. **For me PR is akin to having a ticket to a party. If you have one, you're in** – if not, your out, and in the supplemental results (a sort of alternate version of Google where not all filters /requirements are turned on because they are uncompetitive terms).

A PR 5 page will not necessarily outrank a PR 0 page because in the wild, other metrics matter more. I'm basing these opinions on the notion Google is still using Pagerank in some way – just not as an important ranking measure.

1. If you have a lot of pages, a lot of PR is good if you are spreading about properly
2. Getting a link from a high PR domain is cool, but only of real use in a PR donation sense if the actual page your link is on has a decent PR (ie is well linked to itself) and doesn't have a hundred other links on there.
3. Pages on your site which have a [grey bar *might* be an indication of a potential issue](#) or indeed G might have a problem with OR
4. It can also be a simple sign you're [not linking to pages often enough in the site structure](#). Then again.... it might be just a bug with the toolbar.
5. A high PR might be an indication of the popularity and reputation of a site, but then again, it might be a hijacked PR sourced by a crafty SEO who's spotted a conduit that can be exploited.
6. A page's high PR might be a good indication of the popularity of that page, and a 2 second test to determine the canditure of that page to get a link from, and I still use it as such

I do think Google has gone a long way over the last 18 months to radically change the way either PR is donated, or radically reduce from which pages PR is donated.

I think a lot of it is to do with click / crawl depth. For instance, [forums don't pass a lot of Pagerank](#) these days compared to what they used to, but maybe that's because they're just bigger. Most low quality directories don't seem to pass a lot of PR. Social media sites seem to suffer the same problems as forums. I don't think blog comments pass a lot of PR either.

The fact is nobody knows how it works these days, it's probably far removed from the original pagerank paper, and while it may still be a defining entry level requirement for competitive SERPS, it's not an important element AT ALL when it comes to ranking pages that are already in the SERPS – there are other, much more important influences.

How To Improve Your Pagerank Score

First, if you want a particular page on your site to have PR, make sure it's original content, and unique enough that Google would want to keep it in it's index. For instance, a list of links often goes Grey. Pages with duplicate content, and those not linked to often enough in the site structure is also a surefire way of going grey.

1. **Get links from real sites**
2. Get links from pages than in turn have links to them
3. Links from articles with a few links that You are the main focus of are excellent
4. Getting a link in the Yahoo directory for instance, still looks like a great way of getting an instant PR boost, great for new sites, but it costs £199 for a year
5. Getting a link on a trusted domain's resource page (ie for jobs, events etc) like a university or government site
6. Buy an old or expired domain, or comandeer an old domain network that has PR, and transfer PR in by way of links or 301s.

In the end, you should not be thinking about improving your Pagerank. Pagerank is an after effect.

Just get links from real sites and forget about Pagerank.

If you're Toolbar Pagerank score is reduced this PR update, it just means the links you have are passing less PR or the links you had have been removed. That's nothing to be worried about if you're actively promoting your site, and it won't have an impact on your traffic or rankings, if you have a smidgeon of PR left.

Some Google Toolbar Grey Pages Do Not Pass Anchor Text Value Or PR?

First – I actively monitor Grey google toolbars on internal pages on various sites. I love it when I see a new one 😊

Having a Google Toolbar Grey bar, (pages that look, according to [Google's toolbar](#) for your web browser, to have no Pagerank) while it may have no apparent detrimental affect to ranking the actual page in SERPS, ***might* be an indication that page is not passing [anchor text](#) value or pagerank.**

I've tested it on a couple of pages. **I can't find a grey bar page that i can determine passes anchor text value.** The same pages appear to pass pagerank, but on closer inspection, this

might be because of syndication to other sites. as I monitor the phenomenon, it's interesting to see which pages pop up with Grey Toolbar values. The last one I saw (which appeared from nowhere) was a page with sloppy internal anchor text variation to the same page, low link equity and a possible slight dupe content issue.

But what is the meaning of the Google Grey bar? If it is not a ranking penalty, perhaps it's a sign the page isn't passing value to other external sites?

Some other notes:

- Typically pages that have relatively less links pointing to them, but well linked to pages can have a grey toolbar too
- Pages with no Toolbar PR do rank so they *must* have real PR – in most cases for 'honest' pages toolbar grey has no detrimental effect in rankings even for mildly competitive phrases
- Obviously pages that are nothing more than manipulation or engage in shady links somewhere, or have a severe duplicate content issue, might have grey bar and will probably not be in the Google SERPS
- Some pages don't seem to pass anchor text value, some do (although this could be because of syndication issues by scraper sites and duped and reworked content)
- Pages with a toolbar grey may still apparently pass PR to other pages (I tested this specifically a couple of months ago) with one link to a new site from a greybar page I thought might have been a 3 or a 4 – and the site got a PR 2 I think (although again this could be syndication ripples ie links from other sites that's republished this blog's content).
- Common problems associated with Toolbar Gray which caused the page to disappear from Google *sometimes* seemed to suffer from dupe content issues, and another typical example was pages with just links.
- Pages with *low link trust* that have different anchor text links to the same destination page
- Pages with links to irrelevant sites which Google *thinks* could be paid links (which are against Google terms of inclusion)

Results? It's buggy that's for sure – and it's probably meant to be. You cannot make any assumption about a page with Toolbar PR grey until you look at it, how it's linked to within the site, who it links to, where it ranks and if it's links are passing anchor text ranking value – so this isn't a simple check.

Some pages did seem to pass value, but on closer inspection, I found these articles republished on other sites, so there's a chance some of these links passed on the anchor text.

Theories – I think if you have a toolbar grey page,

- the page may be either brand new and Google does not know about it
- google is ignoring it because it has a problem with it (like too much dupe content),
- the page does not have enough trusted link equity,
- Google may have penalised it for something like too little unique content

- or doesn't like what the page links to (a paid link?),
- how the linking is set up or
- it looks like a traditional links page (which Google doesn't like)

Of course, it also could be a bug. It sure is glitchy!

What to do

- Check if the page ranks in Google for its title / main keywords – if it does, it's not penalised – maybe it just isn't passing anchor text (although that's not to say every page with toolbar pr passes value).
- Get more links to the page in the internal navigation and in page and see if it's a lack of trusted links problem.
- Examine who the page links to (a possibility but I see the same type of linking on pages with PR) – I surmise a page might need a certain level of trusted links
- Is the text totally unique? Rewrite it.
- Does this page look like a links page? Change it.
- Trying to do too much with your anchor text? Change it.
- If it's a low quality page with little traffic anyways, sometimes I just [301 Redirect](#) it to the most relevant page on the site

Finally. If you see a grey toolbar – check to see if there's any issues I've highlighted above. Sometimes it looks like a glitch, sometimes not. **If it ranks and you're not bothered about spreading link equity to other sites, don't worry about it (for now). Remember – not every grey bar links page pass no weight!**

Site Structure

- A [google friendly site structure](#) spreads builds link equity to internal pages and allows them to rank better in Google over a prolonged period.
- [Link to important pages on your site often](#) IN TEXT CONTENT.
- If you have a large ecommerce site, consider a directory structure setup - Home > Category > Sub Category > Product (and link to related products on product pages).
- Be careful not to create spammy looking internal link structures and be rewarded with a 'penalty'.
- It's incredibly important to add a great diversity of keywords to your internal link profile (I think)

Related Articles

Optimize Internal Website Navigation For Google

How I visualize [seo](#) (note I said visualise – this is not “how it works” as nobody knows “how it works”) and note, this is how I ensure my sales pages get enough Google Pagerank ‘heat’ or ‘Google-juice’ or ‘link equity’ to get into the primary index of Google and then rank. Please bear in mind, a page only needs Page Rank to get into this index – that’s all Google PR is good for.

SEO Gurus talk about PageRank, ToolBar Page Rank, Link Equity, Topical Relevance, Hub, Neighbourhood, Co-Citation, Link Flows, Link Juice, PR Leaks, and Conduits....the list goes on. I have listened to many theories and always will – it’s definitely one of the things I enjoy about search engine optimization.

I have a slightly different view on seo, one that seems to help me get the results I aim for. I say seems because in the end, nobody can really pinpoint exactly why a site enters the top spot for a very competitive term – I can always put it down to a cascade of decisions and choices, the right content and the right links.

I don’t pretend to understand the mathematics – actually I ignore the mathematics for as long as I can!

SEO Theory – How I visualize it all in my head so my head doesn’t burst

OK so everybody *knows* it’s about the links. Trying to figure out why it is the links, and which links, can make me go a little mad. And yes, I know Google sees a link as a vote and all that in a big “democratic” world wide web of information.

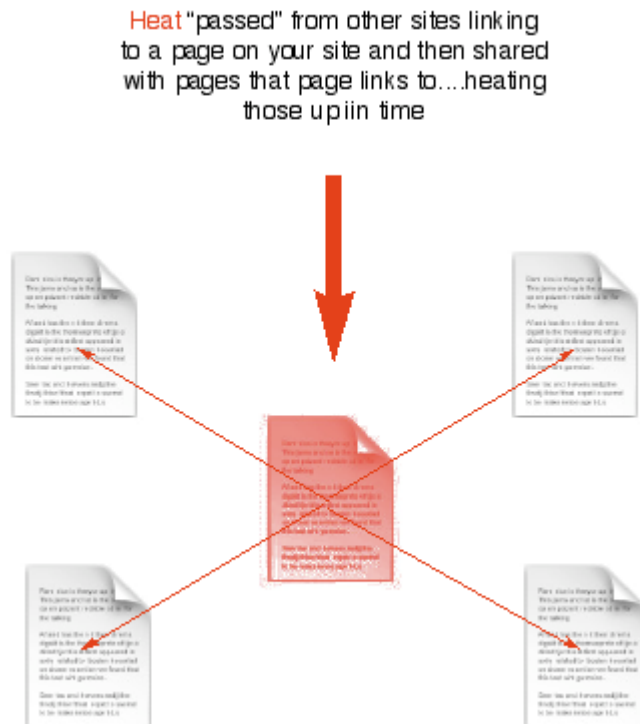
Trying to understand the interlinking structure of any network or site and the back and fro of the actual measurements a search engine makes could again, make you a little mad.

Thinking of it in terms of “Google-Juice” as I have for the past few years can again get me a bit mixed up.

A Heating System

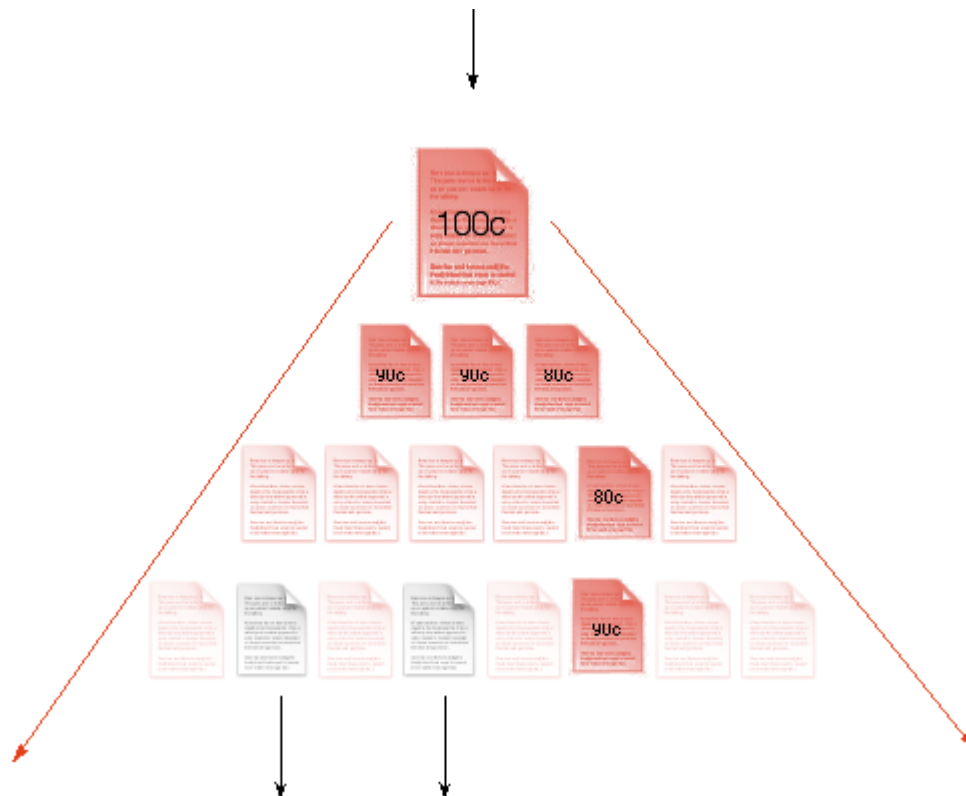
I forget about the links when I'm trying to look at the big picture and think of a heating system, one that's been calculated for me. I don't need to calculate anything – I just need to observe.

Links are like lasers. When you link to a page, you heat the page you are linking to. If your site was measured in heat, you could see the heat-map of your site pages, once all the links have been accounted for.



This is manageable. You control this by which pages you choose to link to and from which pages you link from – it's a simple premise which seems to get me results.

Get *past* all the interlinking of links. Once you have created a search engine friendly navigation system for your website and Google has crawled and indexed, *it's been calculated*, and now you must have “hot” and “cold” pages for whatever Google is wanting a hot or cold page for (To Get Into The Main Index In The First Place! Trust? Authority? Relevance? Neighbourhood?).



Hot pages are created when you link to them. The more you link to them the hotter they get. The more links to a page from the others, the hotter that page. (This is where the analogy of PR is put aside, because it doesn't matter if you overheat a page in terms of PR. Many think Google PR is just a means to get a page into the main index, the whole point of PR is to spread it about as many pages as possible – a PR 5 is not going to rank above a PR1 on every occasion).

Typically, you're home page is hotter than the rest of the site, and indeed this is generally the hottest page on the site. In my example, I only have a couple of real sales pages – the rest is just introductory pages to hopefully my sales pages – these are generally a bit more targeted and generally geared to the theme of this site – seo. Anybody interested in my services or looking to hire the company will definitely want to read these pages so I make sure I tell Google, for instance, these are important pages I'd actually like the visitor to be presented with.

In the model above, I wanted to ensure my sales pages were the hottest pages on the site, so made sure my site tells the search engine this. If I can't be bothered telling a search engine what's the most important pages on my site, can I expect Google, Yahoo or MSN to figure it out for themselves? Actually, Google wants you tell them what's the hottest pages on your site in Webmaster Tools these days.

Then I wanted to make sure I took the rest of the heat and use it to warm up as many of the other pages on my site as is possible before it left in a natural way via external links.

As of last month, I don't link out to other sites from the Hobo home page. I'm greedy with my heat. I want all my pages to be toasty before I pass on the rest. I now don't link out together sites from my category pages or my sales pages either. I think your hottest pages should really be for heating up your own site.

Sure you can share the heat. I do, and some of these links are quite "hot" relatively but now from pages I designate and not at the expense of the Hobo site. I could go one further and add a lot of links on my single pages to further dilute the heat "transfer" externally, and I might.

Sure, you want as many pages in the main index as possible. A new site however doesn't have a lot of heat to spread around, so ensure your sales pages are optimized properly and are the hottest pages in your structure, because odds are some pages will be marked "cold" and threw into the supplementals.

Cooler pages can be drawn into the main index by increasing the heat of your site root by getting links from other websites – other hot spots.

You can heat up a cold page by linking to it from the home page.

I make sure my "hot pages" are as optimized as possible for the type of serps I'm chasing at any given time.

It's a little uncool to admit it but I am a SERPS chaser. I'd rather have ten people visit my site in one week because of some keyword I targeted in Google and have two people by my product than have 5,000 people hit my website because of something I wrote for [a bit of fun](#) 6 months ago to test out an idea for a site map (this page is currently getting "Stumbled" and has been all week).

We actually get a couple of hundred visitors a day to this site and a couple of leads per day. For a four man team trying to work out how to manage a company never mind a growing one, that's far too many leads, and the reason we don't have a sales team. We've never "asked" for work in our existence.

It's worth noting that every site, every neighbourhood is different. The above structure suits me, as we only sell a couple of products, and we have a good amount of heat to circulate. A shopping cart might want to drive all that heat down and spread it out to as many sales pages as possible possibly through a category > sub-category > products hierarchy. If you don't have a lot of heat to start off with though, you may find that a thankless task, for a while, so you may want to rethink this strategy and focus your internal links on products you want to promote quickly.

At the beginning of projects, I like to get a handle on which pages are or need to be hot, especially with new sites or sites without a lot of link-love. You can't control much but this you can do.

I like to structure my site so I don't need to "nofollow" a lot of internal links to target heat – but I have no problem using this method. I'm thinking of a page by page process – pages I am "nofollowing" will get some link at some point to heat it up a little.

Thinking like this when I am thinking about navigation helps me, I think, build a site for visitors, which is the ideal scenario. I want visitors to see my sales pages. Same with Google.

Once you've optimized a site, it's time to get those hot pages optimized for your main keywords and get some links from other sites.

Which sites? Hot sites, of course, or at least sites with some sort of heat signature. Thinking in this way makes me think neighbourhood (if you want heat in a particular neighbourhood you've usually got to join it by linking to it) and relevance and hub is just a natural phenomenon following this heat about, and the above diagram helps me visualise a neighbourhood of sites too.



If I could take a link today from a Hot! site / page or a very relevant page that looked cold and had little chance of getting hotter.... or I'd take the Hot link if the site was authoritative and in some way "trusted". Probably get more click through traffic too.

With this in mind, Hot sites could rank for anything if optimized to do so. This is what I see in many cases. Want to see a hot site with hot pages optimized to rank for a term – try Google. They are at the top, and you'll probably notice a couple of pages in there that don't seem very relevant at all too – hot sites all though as far as Google is concerned and until some manual or algorithmic relevance filter kicks in.

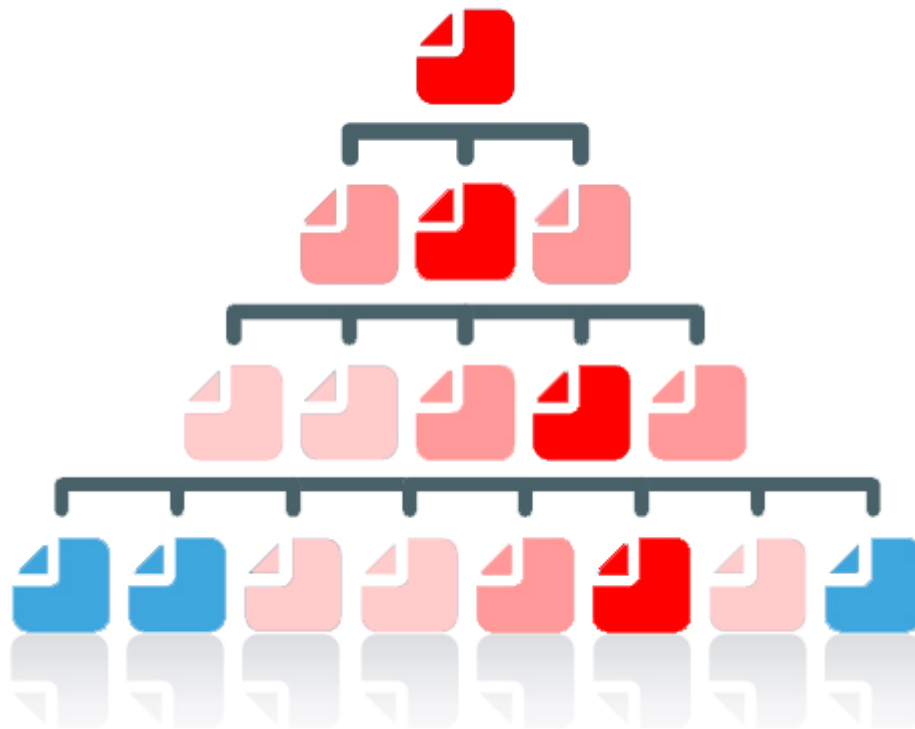
So there you have it. A bit of seo theory bunkum I sometimes use to visualise things.

If you're interested in seo theory you can have a look at my [article on linkbuilding with Jim Boykin](#), or [my thoughts on Google Pagerank](#). I've tested quite inconclusively (!) whether [Google likes valid html or not](#), and I've also attempted to sum up [what seo is for beginners](#). I also tested out [how many words Google will read in the title 'tag'](#) and once kind of proved the point a [relatively hot site can rank for anything with one article](#) when I nicked into the top spot for a well known brand using a bit of simple seo.

Link To Important Pages In Your Site – Often

I've mentioned this before. Onsite, one of the most important things you can do, is **link to important pages** often. I used a '[links-are-lasers](#)' analogy last year which I still use today.

1. Links Are Lasers
2. Linking To A Page Heats Up A Page
3. Pages Get Hot Or Cold Depending On Number & Quality Of The Links To It
4. Cold Pages Don't Rank For Sh*t
5. Hot Pages Rank!



In the diagram above, this is how I [optimise sites](#). I focus on the main pages in the structure, the pages we need to rank at any one time (esp. on a new site). I make sure I link to these pages more than any other – and it appears, by doing so, Google does see these as important pages on my site.

You can achieve this with secondary navigation arrays and links in content, but I would err on the safe side, and vary your [anchor text](#) as much as possible. And don't just link for linking sake.

Remember, links from other websites also heat up pages. Make sure you link to other relevant pages from these hot pages, to spread the heat throughout the site. I'd go one step further and say link to your important pages from your home page.

1. [Optimize A Website Structure](#)
2. [SEO Heat Analogy](#)

A Sitemap

- Every site should have a site map, just in case
- Sitemaps help Google identify your pages
- Sitemaps are good for keeping your pages in Google SERPS
- Large sitemaps should probably be broken into pages of no more than about 100 links to be on the safe and usable side.
- Sitemaps should be linked to from every page on your site
- Sitemaps help spread Pagerank throughout your site ensuring pages are included

Link building

- Key to better ranking in Google is getting lots of real sites to link to your website with desired keywords in the anchor text.
- Link building should be a mixture of organic and manufactured links,
- It's important to [vary anchor text in your linkbuilding](#) or Google might respond negatively.
- Just about every form of linkbuilding is grey hat, and sometimes then defined as black hat by Google at a later stage.
- Consider our [Introduction with Jim Boykin](#)

Related Articles

[Optimize Internal Website Navigation For Google](#)

Anchor Text Optimisation

As a [seo](#) I wanted to know – **how many words or characters does Google count in a link?** What's best practice when creating links – internal, or external? What is the optimal length of a HTML link?

It appears the answer to the question 'how many words in a text link' is **55 characters**, about 8-10 words.

Why is this important to know?

1. You get to understand how many words Google will count as part of a link
2. You can see why you should keep titles to a maximum amount of characters
3. You can see why your domain name should be short and why urls should be snappy
4. [You can see why you should rewrite your urls \(SEF\)](#)
5. It's especially useful especially when thinking about linking internally, via body text on a page.

I wanted to see **how many words Google will count in one 'link'** to pass on [anchor text](#) power to a another page so I did a test a bit like this one below;

1. pointed some nonsense words in one massive link, 50 words long, at the home page of a 'trusted' site
2. each of the nonsense words were 6 characters long
3. Then I did a search for something generic that the site would rank no1 for, and added the nonsense words to the search, so that the famous "*This word only appear in links to the site*" (paraphrase) kicked in
4. This I surmised would let me see how many of the nonsense words Google would attribute to the target page from the massive 50 word link I tried to get it to swallow.

Using a [character calculator tool](#) the answer was.....

1. Google **counted 8 words in the anchor text link out of a possible 50.**
2. It seemed to ignore everything else after the 8th word
3. 8 words x 6 characters = 48 characters + 7 spaces = a nice round and easy to remember number – 55 Characters.

So, a possible best practice in number of words in an anchor text might be to keep a link under 8 words but importantly under 55 characters because everything after it is ignored (in the link)?

Linkbuilding

This of course has an impact in writing your titles for pieces you want linked to – especially for those with a habit of taking the article title and linking it to the page. Most are aware a title should be under @ 65 characters to have maximum impact in Google. From a test I did, Google ignored words in a title after 75 characters. But if Google only attributes the first 55 characters in a link, does this mean there's at least a **10-20 character no-man's land** to consider when creating links & headlines?

All the more reason to have important keywords at the beginning of your page title, and your brand name at the very end?

If you like this test, you might like;

1. [Will Google Rank Pages Better With Valid Code?](#)
2. [How Many Words Will Google Count In The Title Tag?](#)
3. [A Google Friendly Website Navigation System](#)
4. [Do It Yourself Search Engine Optimisation](#)

Addendum

If people used the title of this page to link to this article, which is preferable, ([Limit Anchor Text Links Under 55 Characters In Length?](#) (I've tweaked this again)) – that's 54 characters, within measured tolerance. But because of my website URL structure and length, I might be losing out if people link to the article using the URL. (<http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/anchor-text-length/>) – unfortunately that's over 60 characters, with Google *possibly* ignoring the rich keywords at the end of the link 😞

What do you think about this anchor text optimisation observation?

Jim Boykin's Linkbuilding Tips

I'm chuffed to reveal the first Hobo [SEO](#) UK Interview and bring the world news of Jim's new venture!

Look out [SEOmox PRO](#), here comes the amazing *Internet Marketing Ninja's!*

So It's *Jim Boykin*, CEO of the very much respected US based seo, link-building and internet marketing company, [We Build Pages](#). He was the first person to comment on my personal blog, and to say his posts on seo and link-building at [Jim Boykin](#) got me thinking and inspired me is an understatement. So for me, he was my ideal guy to ask to kick off the SEO. Q&A Interviews, and luckily for me he said yes.



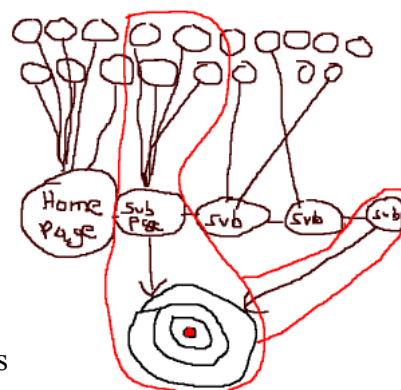
I approached Jim and asked him a series of questions. I was pleased as punch to receive a quick reply and all in the original form they were put to put to him.

Hobo: Jim, thanks for your time. As the comment on my personal blog is testament to, you were the first person to actually make me “think about links” (you were actually the first person to comment on my personal blog, too, which is pretty cool).

When I was building links to this site I must have read your entire blog, and I have to say, your writing inspired me into thinking more creatively about link-building and gave me ideas of how to identify decent links. If you had to pick 5 link-building posts from your blog for people to remember you by, and get rid of all the others, which 5 would you pick?

Jim – hum....can I go with 6?

1. Can Google Find and Spank your Paid Links? www.jimboykin.com/google-paid-links
2. Reddit Paid Links and Loosing Trust www.jimboykin.com/paid-link-trust/
3. Links Within Content, Linking to Content – a Rant. www.jimboykin.com/links-within-content-linking-to-content-a-rant/
4. Part Two on Tips for finding the best pages to get links from. www.jimboykin.com/part-two-tips-for-finding-the-best-pages-to-get-link-s-from/
5. How come that site with 50 backlinks beats your site with 1000 backlinks. www.jimboykin.com/site-backlinks/
6. Changes and Paranoia – the sky is falling www.jimboykin.com/45/



Hobo: Yup read all of those! (a couple more of my favourites later). You're considering going under the radar and have mentioned you may stop blogging. Scared of Google these days? What did you think of the “recent Pagerank massacre” and “War on Paid Links”.

Jim – “Massacre” and “War” are quite the fightin’ phrases....maybe I’d call it “The [Great Toolbar PageRank](#) Illusion of late 2007” myself....or maybe some Google engineers call it the “Hehe, you’re Pagerank 8 now looks like a Pagerank 4 because it looks like you were selling links purely for Pagerank Value”, there’s also other various SEO’s and bloggers who tempt Google, unknowingly or not have been spanked around (mostly by showing a lower

Pagerank, but not effecting rankings), oh yea and blog reviews are getting spanked around too....yea, maybe you could call it a “war”....but in the SEO Business, change is always happening. For years Google has been drawing the lines with what they can do algorithmically, and with some Human Spam Engineers, and what they can do with FUD.

What do I think about that? Well, Don’t tempt Google by openly buying or selling links – If you’re going for links, stay under the radar.

Hobo: OK “massacre” etc might have been a tad over dramatic, but [Andy](#) was certainly pissed about it! This site dropped to a PR5 from a PR7, with no loss of traffic. We never sell links but I decided I would clean up my internal and external link neighbourhood anyway – it was overdue.

I’m an on-page seo. I’m addicted to it. Are you still addicted to link building or do you have people to do that for you now? Are you still a seo addict?

Oh, and Jim, FUD sometimes means something different in Scotland.

Jim – I am a hardcore SEO and link building addict. Every now and then I do have some correspondence that might produce a link....but I no longer send emails or make calls requesting any links, since out of 30 employees, 20 are full time Link Ninjas, But to this day I still totally obsess over the methods and the art of link building/SEO.

Hobo – I confess I think I’ve asked people for about ten links in my entire career via email. I’m obsessing about internal linking at the moment and link juice flow and have been for a month or two.

What shouldn’t link builders obsess over?

Jim - Toolbar Pagerank and Number of Links. That’s been something that the past few years most knew to ignore, but recently, for some reason, people are flipping out over Toolbar Pagerank stuff. Some don’t agree that the toolbar is for entertainment purposes only. If you don’t care about Toolbar Pagerank, then chances are, you don’t have any issues with the games Google is playing right now. And if your focus is Pagerank, then you’re asking to get whacked by Google.

Hobo – Ever consider doing a SEOMoz with premium content and tools?

Jim – Hehe. Funny you should ask. You’re the first “press” I’m telling about the [Internet Marketing Ninjas Program](#) I can’t say too much about this now, but **probably within days of**

this interview being published it will live. It's an amazing collection of videos by many of the world's best Internet Marketing Ninjas talking about their specialty in Internet Marketing.

Hobo – That sounds fantastic and I'll defo have a look.

Jim, what is a quality link these days? Go on, give me an idea of the signals you're looking at, and the tools you use. Is the most valuable link a link embedded in text content?

Jim – Well, if I were to see a link somewhere, and were ask to value it's SEO's worth, then I'd look at the page where the link is located on, and compare it where that link links to. From the "ad" page, I'd see what percent of the internal links link to that page, then I'd check the internal link text used to link to that page, then I'd check external links to that page, and link text used from other sites that link to that page, then I'd look at the title tag of the page, then I'd look at the content of that page, I could peek at the age of the url, edu's, edu's to page, other links on that page (co-citation), related pages of that page, and a few other things too....there's tons you can analyze, and all have a certain value. In the end it comes to "you get what you can get", it's not always the "perfect link".

Hobo – OK I meet you at a seo conference, you've agreed to help me out, and I ask you what's the best bit of advice about link building you can give me and you,ve got about 5 seconds before you need to rush off. What do you say?

Jim – Get links from sites that aren't openly selling links.

Hobo – OK I meet you at a seo conference, you like the cut of my jib, and I ask you what's the VERY best bit of advice about link building you can give me and I put a Grand in your hand (\$ of course not proper money). Would your advice be any different from above?

Jim – I would elaborate on how to find those types of sites, and what to do when you've found them....but that's not something I'd ever publish.

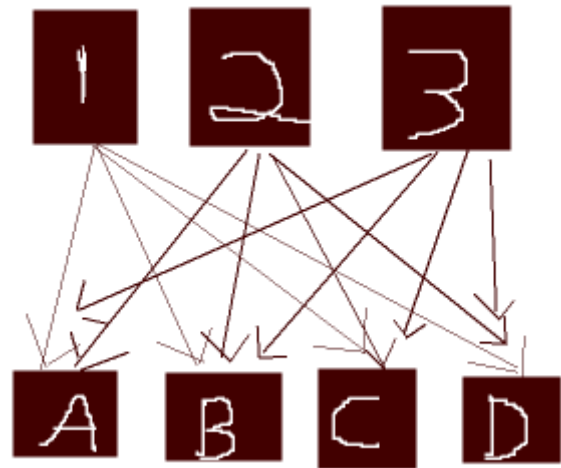
Hobo – What do you think is the biggest myth in link building today?

Jim – That Social Media (SMO – Edit) is the solution to link building/rankings.

Hobo – I hear you. I got bored spamming those months back and have watched as one by one each is devalued. It's good for reputation management noise and a bit of traffic nut you need to be dedicated to pull it off.

We all know Google keys off many different signals at any one time to rank pages. How important is who you link to, for instance? How important is co-citation these days?

Jim – It's all pieces of the puzzle, and who you link to is an important part. If you've got crappy links pages still up from 1999, you might want to revisit those. I believe who you link to effects the "trust value" of your site. If you link out to crappy SEO'd sites you probably don't have much trust, but if you link out to highly trusted sites I believe it can help your sites trust value, and thus rankings. It's one piece of the puzzle.



Hobo – Do you believe that the proximity of keywords in text next to, for instance, “click here” links plays a factor in [seo](#) today?

Jim – Yea, I've been thinking that for years. I'd bet words near links play a role, and to another extent, all words on that page play a role.

Hobo – Do you consider geo-targeting when obtaining links?

Jim – Yes, sometimes.

Hobo – Do you think Google actually knows the topic / theme of my website, then?

Jim – Yes, I'm sure there's Word signals they look at to help them determine topics. Signals like: Similar Pages, common words found on your website, words used to link in, topics of sites that link in, etc, etc. Yes, I believe Google knows a lot about topics, that's a piece of the puzzle too.

Hobo – What's your take on directories these days. Do you personally rate any?

Jim – 98.5% are worthless crap, and if you're on 50% of the "top 50" directories you've just flagged your site as an SEO'd site.

Hobo – Yeah I've never been much of a directory guy either. I just got into DMOZ after 6 years of trying (after reading an article of yours actually and then only by picking the most boring non-optimized title and description I could think of:

DMOZ – ("[Hobo-Web Ltd UK](#) – Offers web design and SEO services. Includes a portfolio of designs and contact forms."

I am considering Yahoo! again these days however.

Do you think you can hurt a competitor's ranking with crafty anti-links?

Jim – I'm sure I could....I'm sure I could buy some huge over the radar links for a competitor, then spam some forums, edu's, and blogs, then I could email a Google Engineer, and that site may be toast.....could it be done, certainly, but I'd never do it.

Hobo – What's more important. *1. Links 2. Internal Google Juice 3. On-page Optimization?*

Jim – *Links*...with links you can trump everything else, without them, you can't.

Hobo – I don't see you that much in the social networking sites I frequent. Where, do you hang out these days online? Which sites have you visited every day in the last week?

Jim – I visit [Digg](#) for entertainment daily, but for daily "work news" I visit [Sphinn](#), [Daily top Sphinn's](#), [Search Engine Land](#), (The Day in Search), [SEOMoz Blog](#), and the Mr and Mrs [SEOBook Blog](#). There's a lot of others I read pretty regularly, but these are every day stops.

Hobo – Actually that's where I'm at every day too, along with Andy's [Niche Marketing](#), [Webmasterworld Google](#) and I have to admit [NSM](#). I bought the [SEO Book](#) a couple of months ago (just not had the time to read it all and in fact recently for some reason sped read [Dan Thies](#) which I enjoyed) and I like Aaron's intense thinking. Sphinn's magic but I tire of the incessant self promotion sometimes although I've found some great blogs because of it. SEOMoz is doing great stuff at the moment and I love Rand's posts that center specifically on seo and linkbuilding.

I can't find a post on the internet calling you anything but a good guy who knows his stuff. Ever said anything online you've ever regretted? Any apologies to make?

Jim – I'm sure I must have pissed off a few people over the years...but luckily I can honestly say that I don't have any SEO enemies that I know of, to me other SEO's are my closest friends.

You won the [best link building blog in 2006](#). What's the best link-building blogs you're reading today?

Who's got the best ideas?

Jim – There's not many who blog almost exclusively on link building anymore. There have been some great SEO Bloggers who have published a lot of articles on the topic of link building this year, like [SugarRae](#) , [Graywolf](#) , [SEOBook](#) , [Sebastian's Pamphlets](#) , [SEOMoz](#) , and others.

Hobo – Nice to know I'm reading the right blogs. Nicked a couple of ideas from Michael at [Wolf-Howl](#) (visible and hidden) and compared my ideas with those at SEOMoz. I discovered Sebastian via Sphinn and have enjoyed a visit or two.

Your post [about link neighbourhoods](#) is in my head every day (and has been for as long as I realised I was addicted to this stuff). I'm a believer but I'm not a hundred percent sure of it these days. So many sites rank, especially in the seo industry, on crap sitewide links from client sites, or at least it looks that way.

What's your thoughts on "neighbourhoods" and "hubs" these days?

Jim – I still highly believe it neighborhoods. There's different ways to skin the SEO Cat, and one way is trying your best to work within the neighborhood. Yes, there's always exceptions that are in the top 10 at any given time...but I do find that those sites that stick around in the top 10 year after year are often the ones in the right neighborhood.

Hobo – You've hung out with Tedster on WMW, haven't you? There's a guy who knows his stuff and I really respect. Which SEO do you really rate in the seo world?

Jim – Tedster is a legend at [Webmasterworld](#) who brings sanity and great wisdom when he comments. There's a ton of people I really respect in this business, too many to list, and I'd feel guilty for forgetting whomever I'd forget.

Hobo – “Jim Boykin – The Artful Dodger”. What’s your favourite seo tools, and secondly, your favourite We Build Pages Tools?

Jim – My favorite SEO tool is a private tool that I can’t tell you about, and my favorite We Build Pages tool is the [Top 10 Analysis Tool](#).

Hobo – If you can’t tell me about your private tools who can you tell? OK – Who’s the nicest guy in SEO, apart from yourself? Who is your favourite link baiter?

Jim – [Nicest guy in SEO](#)....might have to go with Todd Malicoat (stuntclub) , he has a way of making everyone happy. Favorite link baiter...[Rand](#).

Hobo – I love Rand’s stuff as well as watching [Andy](#) & [Lyndoman](#) go through the motions and getting passionate about things. Jim, What was the last thing that really made you mad!?

Jim – Hum...when my 3 year old, who was potty trained, reverted back to peeing and pooping in his pants...then I was mad....at least he said to Mommy, “Daddy is MAD!”. But that’s a small thing 😊. I’ve never yelled at work, and only can remember getting mad twice at work in the past 9 years, but even those were brief. I’m a pretty mellow guy overall.

Hobo – Don’t be too hard on the boy. I nearly had a similar set-back too [when I saw this photo of you](#). 😊

We’re a very small [seo company in Scotland](#) trying to get noticed in a crowd. You’ve got 30 people working with you now “what’s been the biggest challenge growing your company over the years and care to share your any tips on managing a small firm? Ever thought “I’ve had enough”?

Jim – I’ve never thought “I’ve had enough”. There certainly has been a lot of challenges going from the CEO of 1 to the CEO of 30. I’m sure there has been a lot that I could have done differently, but I feel lucky at the current outcome of where we are, and I’m looking forward to where we’re going as far as size is concerned.

Yes, the more people we hire, the more unique management situations arise, but on the flip side, it also brings additional talent. I’ve been very pleased with the move from 1 link building team, to the current 4 teams. These teams compete against each other, and the ninjas compete on an individual basis as well. The internal competition is something that I’ve seen can bring out the best in our ninjas. It’s also nice now to see others here working late, and putting in time at home. Now most of the gossip around the water cooler is about Google and

SEOMoz articles or Sphinn stories or client bragging. I found that was harder to create when I had fewer link ninjas.

Hobo – What do you think of Scotland? Many (in Scotland) think it’s the SEO capital of the UK.

Jim – I love it! My Grandfather came over from Scotland. I’ve only been there once, but if you’re into having a beer together, maybe I can work in a business trip this coming year 😊

Hobo – Consider that a “date”. I know you like traveling, so what was the best Expo / Conference you went to this year, what are you going for next year?

Jim – Hum, we’ll I’ll be in Las Vegas for [Pubcon](#) in a few days...that could always be the best for the year....um, they’ve all been fun, I seriously can’t pick 1. But for business trips this year I visited some cool places like, Arizona, San Francisco, The Grand Canyon, Yosemite National Park, NYC, Seattle, Ireland, Olympic National Park, Texas, and others. For 08 I’m looking at Vegas, Grand Canyon, Colorado, Amsterdam, London, and South Africa at the least. I love these perks....at least to me it feels like a perk of the job....even if it is “business”.

Hobo – Forget Scotland, I’ll meet you in Amsterdam 😊

I’m defo going to one of the US gigs this year. Any predictions for 2008? Where’s *We Build Pages* going?

Jim – Up!



Hobo – What would make you happy in the coming years?

Jim – Well, in the long run, to be able to leave the world a better place. In the mean time, to give to my family as well as to take We Build Pages into the future.

Hobo – OK Jim. Start making the world a better place and let me play with your private [WBP tools](#) for an hour?

Jim – I might let you play with some of them real soon....It will be the [Internet Marketing Ninjas Program](#), that includes amazing videos by many of the world's best Internet Marketers. If you purchase the videos you get free access to some of our private tools.

Shaun, Thanks for the interview, I enjoyed your questions and have always enjoyed chatting with you! Maybe we'll grab that beer in Scotland this year!

Hobo – Jim, thanks a million and the pleasure was all mine. Beers sounds magic but only if you're buying the beers of course – I'm from Scotland after all 😊

However I am a little disappointed you never let on which was your [favourite band](#)! Oh well....

Let me know when Scotland is within your reach and I'll take you to a decent bar and diner in Edinburgh or Glasgow to collect them aforementioned beers.

More SEO & Linkbuilding tips

I love [Jim's blog](#) when I am in a link-building mood (and not obsessing at a screen for 6 hours thinking about all the stuff I should actually be tweaking or linkbuilding) – for me, it's still essential reading, as are all the blogs mentioned above, and you should defo check out his tools at [We Build Pages](#). If you've not heard of Jim and your into SEO, you now too officially owe me a beer for these:

- Get backlinks from pages that have backlinks. – www.jimboykin.com/backlinks/
- Why that site with 50 backlinks beats your site with 1000 backlinks. www.jimboykin.com/site-backlinks/
- Co Citation – understanding how it effects your SEO. www.jimboykin.com/co-citation-understanding-how-it-effects-your-seo/
- Links Within Content, Linking to Content a Rant. www.jimboykin.com/links-within-content-linking-to-content-a-rant/
- Picture of Link Neighborhoods www.jimboykin.com/picture-of-link-neighborhoods/

The first interview, hope you liked it. Did I ask the right questions? Would you have asked Jim?

Anchor Text

- Anchor Text is the text that makes up a link. It's the actual words in the link, and this is what Google will rank you for in SERPS when other sites link to your website.
- That's why it's good to get targeted anchor text from either a lot of sites or a few very high quality sites.
- Make your internal anchor text keyword rich too but do not overdo it.
- [Keep links to under 55 characters](#)

Related Articles

SEO – Limit Anchor Text Links To 55 Characters In Length?

Anchor Text Optimisation

As a [seo](#) I wanted to know – **how many words or characters does Google count in a link?** What's best practice when creating links – internal, or external? What is the optimal length of a HTML link?

It appears the answer to the question ‘how many words in a text link’ is **55 characters**, about 8-10 words.

Why is this important to know?

1. You get to understand how many words Google will count as part of a link
2. You can see why you should keep titles to a maximum amount of characters
3. You can see why your domain name should be short and why urls should be snappy
4. [You can see why you should rewrite your urls \(SEF\)](#)
5. It's especially useful especially when thinking about linking internally, via body text on a page.

I wanted to see **how many words Google will count in one ‘link’** to pass on [anchor text](#) power to a another page so I did a test a bit like this one below;

1. pointed some nonsense words in one massive link, 50 words long, at the home page of a ‘trusted’ site
2. each of the nonsense words were 6 characters long
3. Then I did a search for something generic that the site would rank no1 for, and added the nonsense words to the search, so that the famous “*This word only appear in links to the site*” (paraphrase) kicked in
4. This I surmised would let me see how many of the nonsense words Google would attribute to the target page from the massive 50 word link I tried to get it to swallow.

Using a [character calculator tool](#) the answer was.....

1. Google **counted 8 words in the anchor text link out of a possible 50.**
2. It seemed to ignore everything else after the 8th word

3. 8 words x 6 characters = 48 characters + 7 spaces = a nice round and easy to remember number – 55 Characters.

So, a possible best practice in number of words in an anchor text might be to keep a link under 8 words but importantly under 55 characters because everything after it is ignored (in the link)?

Linkbuilding

This of course has an impact in writing your titles for pieces you want linked to – especially for those with a habit of taking the article title and linking it to the page. Most are aware a title should be under @ 65 characters to have maximum impact in Google. From a test I did, [Google ignored words in a title after 75 characters](#). But if Google only attributes the first 55 characters in a link, does this mean there's at least a **10-20 character no-man's land** to consider when creating links & headlines?

All the more reason to have [important keywords at the beginning of your page title](#), and your brand name at the very end?

If you like this test, you might like;

1. [Will Google Rank Pages Better With Valid Code?](#)
2. [How Many Words Will Google Count In The Title Tag?](#)
3. [A Google Friendly Website Navigation System](#)
4. [Do It Yourself Search Engine Optimisation](#)

Addendum

If people used the title of this page to link to this article, which is preferable, ([Limit Anchor Text Links Under 55 Characters In Length?](#) (I've tweaked this again)) – that's 54 characters, within measured tolerance. But because of my website URL structure and length, I might be losing out if people link to the article using the URL. (<http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/anchor-text-length/>) – unfortunately that's over 60 characters, with Google *possibly* ignoring the rich keywords at the end of the link 😞

What do you think about this anchor text optimisation observation?

Search Engine Operators

- Google (and other search engines) can be instructed to return results via *Operators* as a means of querying site-specific metrics
- site:www.hobo-web.co.uk - How many pages Google has in its index - Tip
- Google's link operator is an [inaccurate](#) public measure of the number of sites linking to you
- See [List of Search Engine Operators](#)
- [The Yahoo link operator](#) is actually more useful than Google's equivalent for viewing backlinks
- Live / MSN has a [useful tool for tracking links OUT](#)

Trust

- Google places a lot of trust, in trusted sites
- Trusted sites can get away with a lot more
- Trusted sites are generally careful who they link to
- Trusted sites (I think) can pass trust to other sites
- Trusted sites can inject content on many topics almost directly into Google SERPS
- Trusted sites seem still susceptible to on page filters and penalties
- An aim of SEO is to get a site trusted!
- Consider this [SEOMoz video on Trust](#)

Keyword Stuffing

- The fastest surest way of getting a page penalised is to keyword stuff
- It's a sign of the very most amateur spam sites - you don't want to look anything like spam.
- keyword stuffing can nuke a page in Google SERPS instantly
- Keep language unique and original
- Use keywords and keyword phrases as well as related terms throughout the page generally where relevant

Where Can You Get Links?

- Adding useful content to your site to compel others to links to you
- Dofollow Blogs
- Social Networks
- Directories
- Partner Sites
- Review Sites
- Forums
- PR Sites
- News Sources

Quality Links

- What Is A Quality Link?
- A link from a real site
- A link from a trusted site
- A link from an authority site
- A link from a relevant page on a well structured domain
- A natural link, Think DIVERSITY & AGE
- A manufactured link on any of the above
- Hint - Get links from pages that in turn have links pointing to it - Get Links That Stick & will age.

Crap Links

- Rule Of Thumb: The easier a link is to get, the less value it has
- Links Pages
- Social Media Profiles
- Forum Signatures
- Sitewide links
- Article links
- Crap links are good for new site discovery, that's about it
- Reciprocal links from less trusted sites

Domain Names

- Exact Match Domain Names still work
- Generally speaking you still need to deliver on other factors to rank, it's not a magic bullet
- Less Than Exact Match Domain names are a LOT less effective
- Over time, a well optimised, content relevant exact match domain is a very powerful asset
- It's undoubtedly easier to linkbuild to an exact match domain
- In the end, popular or highly relevant content can beat exact match domains in SERPS

Bad Neighbourhoods

- [Who you link to matters](#)
- If you link to a network of sites Google has identified as spam, your site runs the risk of being judged spammy
- Google has [warned webmasters if they link to bad neighbourhoods](#), they can be penalised.
- Trusted sites can seem impervious to actual [penalties linking to bad neighbourhoods](#)
- Link to a site that is really bad (i.e. injects Malware etc) is a one way ticket out of Google's SERPS.

Related Articles

Bad Neighbourhood = Google Penalty – Do You Link To One?

As if we need any affirmation that linking to “*bad neighbourhoods*” can cause your rankings in Google to nosedive, but here’s an interesting quote from the [Official Google Webmaster Blog](#) ;

Q: I’ve cleaned it up, but will Google penalize me if the hacker linked to any bad neighborhoods?

A: **We’ll try not to.** We’re pretty good at making sure good sites don’t get penalized by actions of hackers and spammers. To be safe, completely remove any links the hackers may have added.

Bad neighbourhoods, to Google, are typically identified by spammy on-page ‘[seo](#)’ techniques and dubious backlink and interlink profiles. You do not want to link to these neighbourhoods, because [who you link to matters](#).

You see search engine spam sites more often than not link out to other spam sites. Spammers and Crackers, intelligent if somewhat unscrupulous, know that these spam networks (or neighbourhoods) need links from trusted sites to validate their existence. Links from trusted sites transfer trust and votes of relevance (Google Juice, whatever) to the receiving sites, allowing these sites into Google’s index. So, they hack your site, place hidden links in the code, and leave you none the wiser.

Google hates hidden links and spam networks. Rather than let your site “[heat](#)” up and [validate a spam neighbourhood](#) so that it can start receiving visitors from Google, it might just remove your site from the index, by classing your site as part of that **bad neighbourhood**.

Determining if a site is in a bad neighbourhood can take some experience, but using this [quirky tool](#), you can actually spot some of the most obvious infractions, like hidden links in articles. I ran the test on the Hobo site and was surprised to see one of my friends had indeed been the victim of a hidden link injection to casino sites and loan brokers. 😞

Have you been hacked? If you've spotted it before you've seen your rankings bomb, there are measures you can take (*apart from deleting the offensive links **immediately!***). This has happened to me before, and as long as you take action immediately, you'll probably be OK. Check out this site about [Wordpress security](#) for more on how to secure your blog from hackers. I've not implemented all the measures I would like to yet, but vigilance is still a good form of security.

If you've been penalised by Google (i.e. removed from the search engine index) because you now link to a bad neighbourhood, you should [read Google's official advice if you've been hacked](#).

My theory is that Google will crawl your site a number of times to check if you still have these links to spam sites. If you remove them, no problem. If they survive multiple crawls, your site may suffer some kind of Google ranking penalty based on a violation of [Google guidelines for inclusion](#) or as part of bad neighbourhood identification.

Anatomy of a Link

- Links For Different Purposes - Identify Why You Want A Link From A Site
- Pagerank
- Trust / Reputation
- Relevance
- Topical Neighbourhood?
- New Site Discovery
- Diversity
- To Muddy Your Link Profile
- Anchor Text Boost
- Traffic (!)

Neighbourhood / Co-Citation

- [Co-Citation](#) may be a similarity measurement used to establish subject similarities between two or more websites - maybe.
- If Y and Z are both cited by X, they could be said to be related to one another, even though they don't directly link to each other.
- If Y and Z are both cited by many other websites, they have a stronger relationship.
- The more websites they are cited by, the stronger their relationship is.
- In short, you don't want unrelated Casino and Viagra sites linking to you if you're not in those industries.
- Consider - [SEO Heat Theory](#)

Related Articles

[Bad Neighbourhood = Google Penalty – Do You Link To One?](#)



I thought I would elaborate on my thinking about [seo](#) “heat” and try to unify how I visualise seo and the art of search engine optimization.

Disclaimer: Not How Google Works, More How I Visualise & Explain SEO To Prevent Madness.

It's based on observations I've made over the last few years. What's this all got to do with Viagra? You'll find out.

Visualizing Neighbourhood “Heat”

All the major search engines rely on links to tell them about sites and pages and to help them determine what a site is about.

Yes, content will always be king (especially in the future) but without links, content can be a mute point.

You can have the best content in the world, but if you don't have links pointing to it from other sites, it may lose out to better optimized content on 'hotter' sites, even if that content is of poorer quality.

To properly visualise this “seo heat” analogy, you've got to accept success in search engines for competitive terms is down to links – the number of links, the number of right links, and the number of 'hot' links.





Links are like lasers. A link to another site “heats” that site up a little. A lot of links has the potential to ignite a site it’s so hot, and send a site to the top of the results. Some links get hotter in time, some get colder, some disappear as each site is affected by those linking to it and from it. With this constant shift, every site’s heat signature is in constant flux, and there’s little you can do to it except getting more of the right links to keep your site hotter than the competition for particular terms.

Some burn hot and then go cold, and vice versa.

OK – Now Forget about the links and keep your sanity. That’s been worked out – Google’s counted the links, and filtered the crap.

In the diagram below, you can see in any matrix, there is natural heat, naturally hot and cold sites, because of the interlinking going on between pages. Popular sites are hotter than unpopular sites, generally.

Hot Sites, A Heat Signature and Those Out In The Cold

So Google now has Hot sites in its index, and Cold sites. Everywhere in-between, Google has sites that generate some sort of “heat signature”. Hot sites are well known and well linked to and more likely to rank for any term if a page is properly optimized on-page and via the internal navigation structure of the website. Hot sites are relatively trusted to inject content “directly” into Google’s index, especially if it’s “unique”, probably with a good amount of natural words to keywords. For instance, this page will probably do OK for “*SEO Theory*” in Google (yup, it was no3, but I changed the title).



‘Cold’ sites are not well connected (by links) to any neighbourhood or heat signature and virtually invisible in Google, except for very specific terms. ‘Hotsites’ can be seen as authoritative and trusted. Cold sites are sites starved of heat, with a linking profile that’s very cold. Hello Google [Supplemental Index](#).

A hot site has the potential to rank in Google serps regardless of site-theme & domain relevance although from my observations these ‘irrelevant’ pages can disappear in time. If it’s on-site architecture is tuned to promote a certain term leading to an optimized page, it will rank.

Hot Sites, Hot Links & Why Google Hates Paid Links

[Google hates paid links](#) because it is an obvious way to generate heat signature a site might not deserve. Identifying one or two hot sites, and purchasing links on hot pages within that site, is enough to ignite an “undeserving” site and entire network and send it to the top of the SERPS.

[Google likes it natural](#), because that way, we do Google’s work for it and identify hot sites by linking to them. One thing is for sure though. If Google was confident they could via algorithmic calculation clearly identify paid links, the whole internet marketing industry would not have been talking about [the war on paid links](#).



In this example we see a hot site linking to a cold site – instantly generating a heat source on this new site. This is not natural in Google’s eyes. It’s not democratic in ‘that’ sense. In a business sense in a democratic world, it is natural for people to buy links. People were doing it long before Google, but you can see how Google would like to keep the “status quo” to

protect it's "index". If the link is relevant Google has nothing to worry about, it's when it's not relevant Google starts to get concerned.

Why should a site rank well in a particular neighbourhood because of the heat it accumulated in another neighbourhood? – SERPS could begin to lose relevance. Again, this is pure speculation, but it makes you wonder just how much Google actually knows about any particular site if it's worried about natural site "heat" signatures, whatever that metric is being used to calculate.

Or maybe they just don't like paid links because it's unfair 😊

Actually I don't like bashing Google too much because I actually think it (Google) is a brilliant concept.

Whatever, [Paid links worry Google](#), and its effect on what we know as "page-rank".

An Example Of A Hot Site

[Wikipedia](#) is an example of a hot site. Everybody links to it. It's probably the hottest site on the planet alongside Google. [Wiki ranks for just about anything](#), and could be optimized further to rank for everything – guaranteed. Google too.



Of course, Wiki's a natural phenomenon now. It has links from cold sites and hot sites in both related and unrelated markets. But concerning relevance, would Wiki still rank for the term "search engine optimization" if all the "related" [seo](#) industry sites (like this one) removed all links to Wiki in a giant secret test on January 2008? I actually think with a heat source like that – "probably". The ironic thing is that it could never be tested, as Google would simply give us the answer it wanted us to have with manual intervention. Google are more likely to intervene in this way much more in 2008 than they ever have in the past. We saw that in 2007.

We've still not got to Viagra yet.

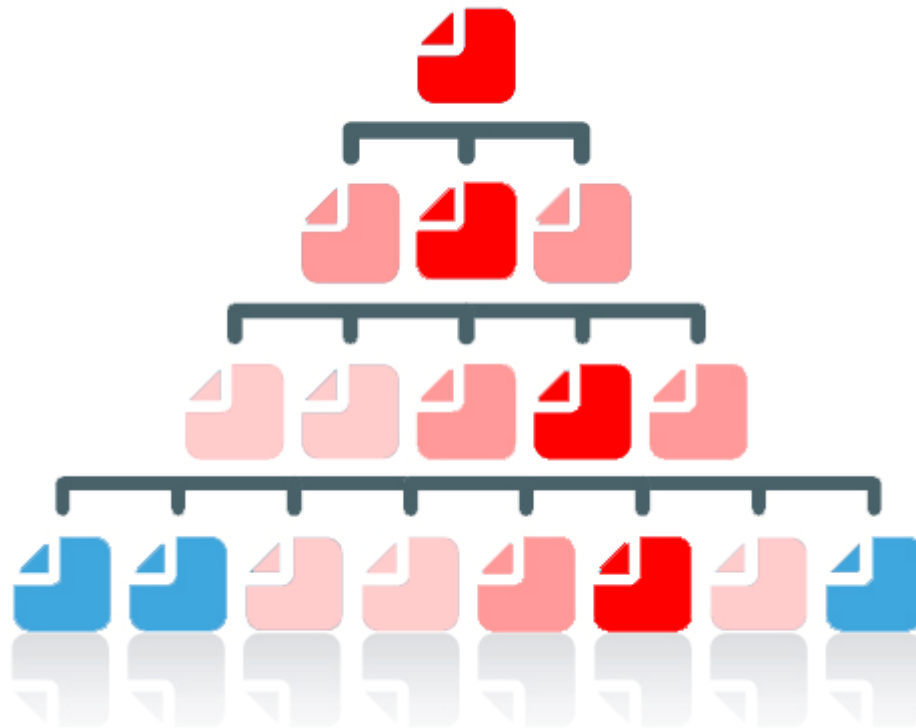
Features Of A Hot Site

A hot site is one which a lot of sites link to it from other sites, all with a different heat signature. Hot sites can rank for anything if a page on the site is optimized in both the architecture of the site and on-page [optimization](#). Hot sites are natural phenomenon created by other sites linking to them – the more popular the site, the more hot and cold links it will accumulate. It's possible neighbourhood and relevance are just natural occurrences of sites dividing the heat up within a particular network.

Hot sites generally link to other hot sites. Generally speaking a hot site won't link to a typically cold site unless that site has content on it that's nowhere else or is "new", in turn making that a hot(ter) site.

How To Make Hot Pages On Your Site

I already discussed how I visualise spreading heat through an actual site, or [how to optimize your internal navigation structure and navigation array](#).



Building a site with this in mind will help you keep in mind the pages you sell your product on need to be ‘hot’. Cold pages in your site will be penalised, regardless of whether Google says there are no supplementals any more.

The thing to keep in mind, is that if you deem pages in your site not to be that important (by not linking to them enough) – what else is Google to think but those pages are not really that ‘important’ especially for competitive keyterms a lot of people are searching for.

Hot Spots On A Page

So what’s a hot spot on an actual page? Well, there are only a couple you really need to be concerned with in terms of where to place keywords. You’ve got to remember that works best in Google (and Yahoo and MSN) is doing something better than all the competition are doing to meet Google’s quality signals, and more of them, or amazingly, less of them (yes a dichotomy but over optimization is as bad as under-optimization). 😊

It’s a simple task to make a page relevant for a search engine. It’s only looking for words.

- The Title Element
- In The Text Content
- In Links Pointing To The Page

That's it. You don't need your keyword anywhere else and if your site is hot enough it will rank. The greater the competition, the more you're going to have to get your site hotter, or optimize your pages and architecture better. It's always about the little stuff on-page and it's always about how hot your site is. There's no magic bullet, no big secret. There's always improvements you can make.

Successful SEO = Hot Links, Hot Site, Hot Architecture & Hot Optimized Content

It's a strange irony that in 2008 mention search engine to anyone in the street and anybody with half an inkling will say "Google" – surely the most relevant search result to return "using" Google.

Perhaps the only reason Google isn't number 1 for "search engine" in Google is because it is not optimized on-site to do so. Simple optimization techniques would take care of that before you had the time to finish them. Perhaps Google deems that a bit too "evil" a stunt.

Getting a site hot is a job in itself, but this theory would [place a lot of weight on internal structure](#) and optimization once the site was hot. It's a constant back and forth for a search engine optimizer working on a smaller client – getting a site hotter, getting a page hotter – until at least it is hotter than the nearest competition.

Improved Tips For Search Engine Dominance

A hot site is one thing, but to top Google you could help your site look more relevant to Google. Remember, it's just words. Words on a page and words in links.

So:

- Is Your Site Hot?
- Is Your Page Hot?
- Is It Relevant To A User Search?



Of course it is, as you've "optimized" it thus. Optimization to take on a competitor is just words... in the right places. In better places than your competition. In hotter sites.

1. Unique Match Domain? – Come On In!
2. In The Text? – Great!
3. In The Title Too? Smashing!
4. Altogether in one term? Wow!
5. Links Out To Other Hot pages in similar [anchor text](#)?
6. HUNDREDS Of Links Pointing to this page with the term!

7. A few High Quality sites linking to the page?

Bingo – You’re on page 1, depending on how hot the site is and how much heat resides within that page. What has this got to do with Viagra?

Perhaps pages accrue a certain amount of heat naturally over time, hence an older domain might have a little more heat than a younger domain. For pages to enter a “neighbourhood” hot spot perhaps they need to link to the inner community and have at least some links to itself from the community – who knows? One thing’s for sure sites need to be kept hot, but only in relative comparison with the direct competition for particular terms. IE you need to keep getting hot links to your site to keep ithot, and old links, disappear leaving you with less heat.

Why is that site above yours? It’s hotter than yours, it’s built better or you’re not using words properly.

What You Need To Do To Get More Visitors From Google

Let’s assume your page is optimized, you need heat. The hotter a site, or rather page, the better the link for your site. If a keyword is in the anchor text of the link, even better. Of course the easiest links to find out there are from pages with very cold, or at least very diluted heat signatures. It’ll take a lot of these to get hot.



If I had a link on the Hot! Hot! Hot! [W3C](#) home page to this page with the anchor text *viagra* and had those words in the right places on my page and in it’s link profile, chances are this site would rank for *buy viagra* even though it has nothing to do with viagra. (If you’re looking to buy Viagra in the UK, oops!) OK it wouldn’t be top because of the enormous (sometimes black hat) competition, but it might feature, and it will feature above sites with a very cold heat signature.

The point is this site could be made to rank for that term with a bit of work, but especially a page on the W3C site could very easily feature for this and any term if they had a reason to. But I like testing everything, so it’s nice to see how “hot” or trusted my site is, and [moving into a totally different area of competition](#) can give you an inkling.

So now you can visualise it, rightly or wrongly, like me. Of course knowing how to achieve something is different from actually putting the effort in to achieve it.

Update: yes this page did rank for viagra terms, but since then, I’ve modified the page title and sitewide links to this page.

Google Sandbox

- The Google Sandbox is highly debated
- [Does the Google sandbox exist?](#) Who knows - a 'Sandbox Effect' certainly exists
- For sure, new sites don't rank well in the beginning, especially if they have been optimised and don't have any quality sites linking to it
- I've seen 'effects', but do think it is about the niche, onsite optimisation, specific key terms and it could be anything from PR itinerating to a complete lack of trust or online business authority
- Got a new site? **Get some links from real sites - quick.**
- Consider - New sites take time to rank

Buying Links

- First rule about buying links is don't talk about buying links
- Second Rule is....
- [Buying links is against Google TOS](#)
- Google really does not like you buying links
- It's generally easy for Google to find most link networks
- Don't buy links from text brokers
- If you do buy links, be careful
- Don't send out emails asking to buy links right off - stay *under the radar*
- Advice: No need to buy links to rank in less than competitive markets.

Selling Links

- Google will penalise your site if it *discovers* you are selling links that influence Google's SERPS
- Most commonly, you will have a Toolbar PR penalty. This is bad if you sell links of course.
- Google penalises pages a lot more than it penalises sites
- If you do sell links, you are supposed to NOFOLLOW them
- Google does not want the links you sell to influence or interfere with the way it ranks pages (via links)

Links Pages

- You don't need a Links Page
- 'Useful Links' pages are often not useful at all
- Be careful taking part in link exchanges via links pages - some are nearly worthless unless from already trusted sites (or sites with more authority than yours)
- Links from these pages are next to useless for established domains
- Google easily identifies such pages, and in my opinion, ignores them \ penalises them.
- Ensure no page resembles a links out page

Cloaking

- Most websites never need to cloak
- Cloaking is against Google TOS
- Cloaking is when content presented to the Google is different to the content which is presented to a user's browser.
- The purpose of cloaking is often to deceive Google so it displays a page when it would not otherwise be displayed on signals that would merit a high ranking.
- Often considered a black hat technique
- Got a question about Cloaking – See <http://twitter.com/fantomaster>

A Searchers Intent

- Optimising a page to satisfy a USER's Intent is a very important aspect of seo
- You can't please all the people all the time
- Really target your seo around a specific user group, and a specific search
- give them exactly what they, the targeted group, need
- Short tail searches are too competitive - go longtail and niche - optimise for longer keyword phrases and increase traffic now!

Vary Anchor Text

- It's important to [vary links in your linkbuilding efforts](#)
- pushing too hard for one term might get your site penalised
- backlinks need to look 'natural' or 'organic' for maximum benefit and safety
- It's surprisingly unlikely you'll have a lot of similar organic anchor text, so this footprint is often easy to spot and devalue.
- Consider [which links Google will count!](#)

Related Articles

Why Vary Anchor Text In Linkbuilding Campaigns

Someone asked me why should they vary anchor texts in linkbuilding.

Imagine you could see Googlebot record your links as it finds them by spidering sites in real time

66

[illegible]

Even, consider, that's your link profile recently generated.

Hmmm. **I wonder how hard it is for the brainiest people in search to pick out your natural links** and ignore / devalue the rest 😊-but can you spot the worthwhile manufactured link that might slip past?

Unnatural mass link acquisition might well be discounted or be totally ignored. I think it **totally depends on the site you are getting the links from though**. 5 trusted sites? Hell, don't bother mixing that [anchor text](#) up at all.

Most times you need a gun at a gun fight, but you have to do it smarter than the above in 2009.

Note – This is a visualisation I use. I don't know if this is the way it actually works of course, nobody does. (Check out our [beginner's guide to search engine optimisation](#) for more).

Internal Links – Only The First Link Counts in Google?

I thought I would share the results of another simple test I did to see how [Google](#) treats internal links.

What does *Google* count, when it finds **two links on the same page going to the same internal destination page**.

I surmised:

1. Google might count one link, the first it finds as it indexes a page
2. Google might count them all (I think unlikely)
3. Google might count perhaps 55 characters of ALL of the available links (could be useful)

OK – **From this test**, and the results on this site anyways, testing links internal to this site, it seems **Google only counted the first link** when it came to ranking the target page.

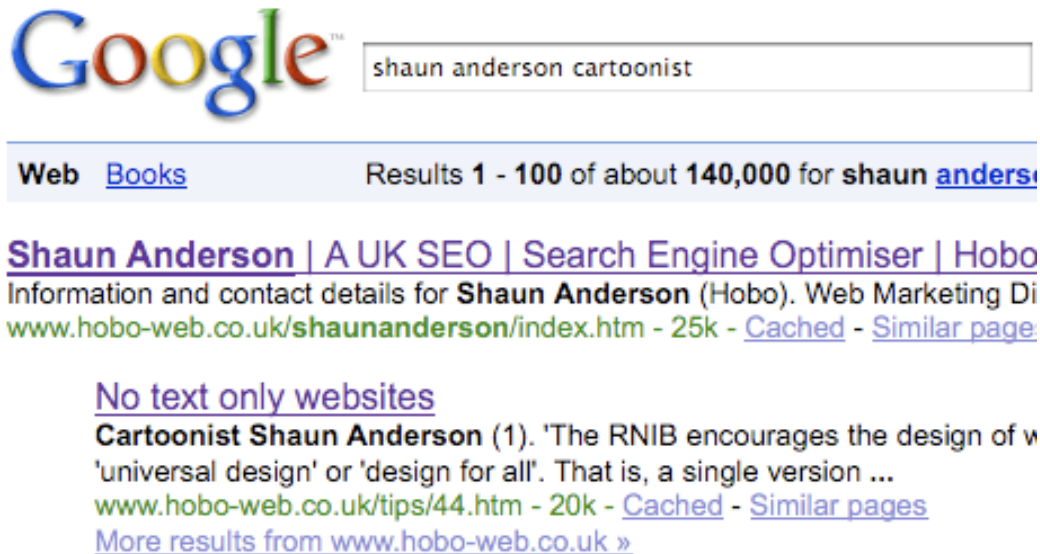
In much the same method as my recent seo test where I tested [how many words you should put in a link](#), I relied on the “*These terms only appear in links pointing to this page*” (when you [click on the cache](#)) that Google helpfully shows when the word isn't on the page.

Again, I pointed 2 everyday words at a page that don't appear on the page or in links to the page, and searched for the page in Google using a term I knew it would rank high for ([Shaun Anderson](#)) and added my modifier keywords. I left it for quite some time, and checked every now and again the results.

This is Google's cache of <http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/shaunanderson/index.htm> of the page as it appeared on 16 Oct 2008 18:23:18 GMT. The [current page](#) could have changed in the meantime. [Learn more](#)

These search terms are highlighted: **shaun anderson** These terms only appear in links pointing to this page: **cartoonist**

Searching for “[shaun anderson](#)” + “[Keyword 1](#)” returned the page (cache shown above).



Searching for the term “[shaun anderson](#)” + “[keyword 2](#)” did not return the page at all, only the page with the actual link on it, further down the SERPS.



shaun anderson fireman

Web Books

Results 1 - 100 of about

[Shawn Anderson's Page - Firefighter Nation](#)

Shawn Anderson's Page Firefighter Nation - Firefighter
www.firefighternation.com/xn/detail/u_Shawnee392 - 50

[FIREMEN ONLY - Firefighter Nation](#)

You need to be a member of **FIREMEN ONLY** to :
sprissler · KClark903 · **Shawn Anderson** · Todd ·
www.firefighternation.com/group/firemenonly - 60
[More results from www.firefighternation.com »](#)

[Personnel - Friendship Fire Company #1 of Bi](#)

Shawn Anderson Firefighter. Brooke Barker Firefighter.
Bascelli Firefighter. This email address is being protected
[birdsborofire.com/mambo/index.php?option=com_content](http://birdsborofire.com/mambo/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=64)
[Itemid=64](#) - 57k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[PR: Valley Preferred Spirit of Courage Awards](#)

... 3-month old Joseph James Maffea will have quite a story
saved his life! Lt. **Shawn Anderson**, Birdsboro Fire Dep
www.lvh.org/lvh/Your_LVH%7C4069 - 79k - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[The Astle Family: Story time with a...firefighter](#)

Today for story time they had real **firemen** tell us all about
and **shawn anderson** · Dustin Ballard · Kathlyn and Dar
jakeandchelsea.blogspot.com/2008/10/story-time-with-a-firefighter
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[The Astle Family](#)

Today for story time they had real **firemen** tell us
and **shawn anderson** · Dustin Ballard · Kathlyn and
jakeandchelsea.blogspot.com/ - 86k - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)
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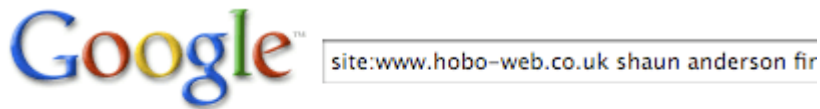
[Never Been Thawed - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

The film revolves around the personal life of main character
writer/director Anders) and his two life pursuits, the Mes
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Never_Been_Thawed - 43k - [Cached](#)

[No text only websites](#)

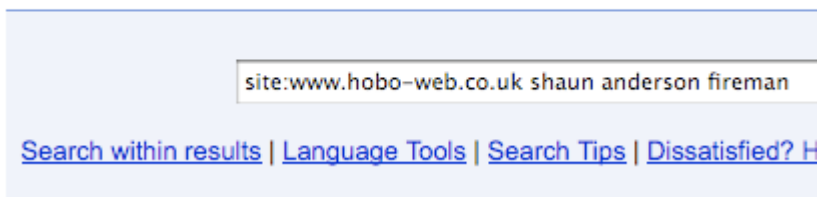
Cartoonist **Shaun Anderson** (1). 'The RNIB encourages
'universal design' or 'design for ... **Fireman Shaun Anderson**
www.hobo-web.co.uk/tips/44.htm - 20k - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[Not even in a site search.](#)



No text only websites

Cartoonist **Shaun Anderson** (1). 'The RNIB encourages the design of 'universal design' or 'design for ... **Fireman Shaun Anderson** (2) ...
www.hobo-web.co.uk/tips/44.htm - 20k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)



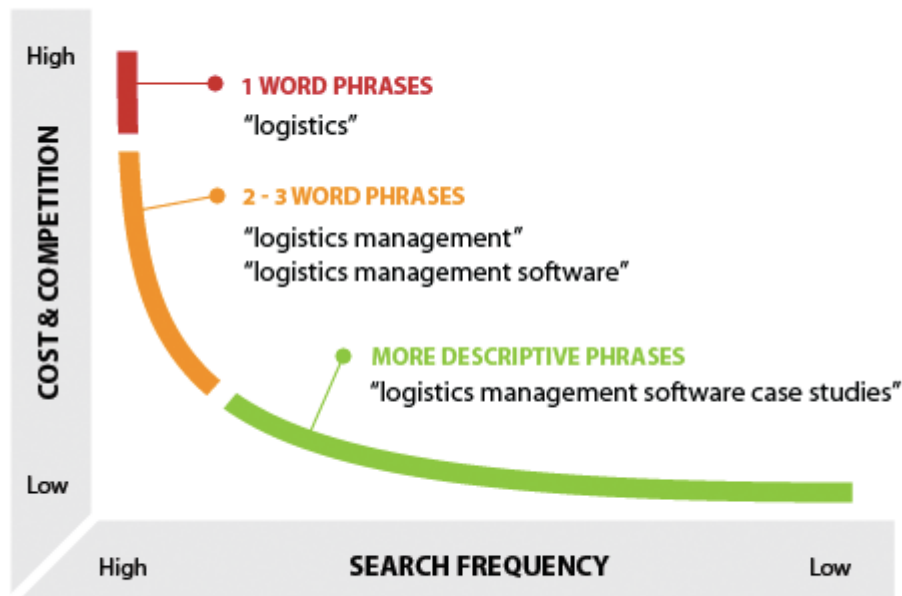
It's not exactly Google terrorism to identify this, so [here is the actual test page](#) where you can see the simple test in action.

So today 😊 on this site 😊 in internal links 😊, **Google only counted the first link** as far as [anchor text](#) transfer is concerned 😊

How you can use to your advantage?

1. Perhaps, you could place your navigation below your text
2. This lets you [vary the anchor text to important internal pages](#) on your site, within the text content, instead of ramming down Google's throat one anchor text link (usually high in the navigation)
3. Varying anchor text **naturally optimises to an extent the page for long tail 'human' searches** you might overlook when writing the actual target page text
4. Of course, I assume links within text surrounded by text are more important than links in navigation menus
5. It makes use of your internal links to rank a page for more terms, especially useful if you link to your important pages often, and don't have a lot of incoming natural links to achieve a similar benefit

B2B Long Tail SEO



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Credit – Graphic first sourced at Search Engine Land and created by Elliance, an eMarketing firm.

Works for me anyways, when I'm building new sites, especially useful on longtail searches, and there's plenty of editorial content being added to the site for me to link to a few sales pages.

Note: I would think Google would **analyse everything it finds**, so it would find it easy to spot spammy techniques we've all seen on sites trying to force Google to take multiple link anchor text to one page.

What do you think?

If you like this test, you might like;

1. [Limit Anchor Text Links To 55 Characters In Length?](#)
2. [Will Google Rank Pages Better With Valid Code?](#)
3. [How Many Words Will Google Count In The Title Tag?](#)
4. [A Google Friendly Website Navigation System](#)
5. [Do It Yourself Search Engine Optimisation](#)

Hidden Links & Text

- Hiding links and text on a page is an age old spam technique. Google has measures in place to penalise pages or ignore pages if it detects such 'abuse'
- don't hide a lot of text or links even using CSS as a design feature on a page if not absolutely necessary as Google might flag it as an abuse of spammy techniques
- To Be Safe, **don't hide text**

Google Analytics

- [GA is a free tool](#) to help you find out more about your website
- Use Google Analytics to analyse;
- No of Visits
- Visitors
- Referrers
- Bounce Rate
- Time On Page
- Conversions
- Rankings
- Check out [things you can do with Google Analytics](#)

Related Articles

[How To Track Visitors, Rankings & Conversions in Google Analytics](#)



Some collected research to show you how to track your [seo](#) internet marketing efforts, clicks and conversion using Google Analytics –

1. [How Do You Track SEO rankings with Google Analytics](#)
2. [How to Count Your Outbound Clicks In Google Analytics](#)
3. [How to Monitor Universal Search traffic with Google Analytics](#)
4. [How to Track Feed Subscriber Referrals in Google Analytics](#)
5. [How To Track New RSS Subscribers Google Analytics](#)
6. [How To Use Google Analytics to Track Feed Subscriptions](#)
7. [Track Internal Search Data With Google Analytics](#)
8. [How To Track PDF Downloads in Google Analytics](#)
9. [How Do I Track Google AdSense Clicks via Google Analytics](#)
10. [How To Track Internal Links in Google Analytics](#)
11. [How To Track Wordpress Signups and Comments in Google Analytics](#)
12. [How to Track Ad Results Using Google Analytics](#)
13. [How to track Google SearchWiki with Google Analytics](#)
14. [Using Google Analytics to Track Google Checkout Orders](#)
15. [How do I track Flash events in Analytics?](#)
16. [How do I track JavaScript events in GA?](#)
17. [How to Track Email Link Clicks in Analytics](#)

Help Google take over the world with Google Analytics – at least you can keep track of it.

If there's any useful tracking and monitoring posts I have missed feel free to drop a line in the comments 😊

"Over Optimisation"

- Over optimisation is a dirty phrase - more accurately, it's sloppy optimisation
- If you optimise EVERY single element of a page *you think* Google uses to rank a page, all you are doing is inviting a filter that pushes your site down in Google, or a penalty which sees your page relatively ignored in Google
- Keep your optimisation tweaks simple
- Stick to natural looking links, page titles & simple internal links and concentrate on the content - not everything ALWAYS needs to be "keyword rich"
- Consider Matt Cutts views - <http://searchengineland.com/googles-matt-cutts-on-over-optimization-21471>

Link Farms

- A link farm is any group of web sites that all hyperlink to every other site in the group
- Although some link farms can be created by hand, most are created through automated programs and services.
- A link farm is a form of spamming the index of a search engine (sometimes called spamdexing or spamdexing).
- Google is really good at spotting and devaluing most link farms
- Don't waste time trying to game Google with link farm like techniques – get links from real sites

Pagerank Leaks

- Google Pagerank is for pages, not sites
- Pages have a certain amount of PR they can give to other pages
- It's been theorised a page donates PR, it doesn't leak PR
- Some think sites may 'bleed' PR through the natural process of linking out to other sites
- Instead of internal pages getting PR, these external pages share in it too meaning less PR for your pages
- **Don't worry about linking to trusted sites** - the benefits of linking out to a neighbourhood of trusted sites outweighs the pros of hoarding your Google PR
- Do ensure your site structure is adequately spreading most of your PR to your pages
- Keep in mind Google Google deals with Nofollow links has changed.
<http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/matt-cutts-kills-internal-pagerank-sculpting-with-nofollow/>
-

Pagerank Sculpting

- The best way to [sculpt pagerank](#) is to consider a useful user centric site navigation structure in the first place
- While you can sculpt PR using nofollow for instance, the benefits on most sites are very small
- Link to important pages often in your navigation links, in navigation arrays and in text content
- I only consider this tactic on large sites with little PR and a horrendous navigation system I can't quickly change
- Matt Cutts says PR sculpting is a second order effect on rankings
- You are probably better focusing on getting more PR in the first place i.e. get more links from real sites.
- Consider this [experts discussion on Pr Sculpting](#)
- Consider <http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/matt-cutts-kills-internal-pagerank-sculpting-with-nofollow/>

Related Articles

Optimise Your Contact Page, Don't Nofollow It

I've long considered [Google Pagerank](#), and the, some great, [PageRank Sculpting discussions](#) around the net, to be akin to an idea of wealth and cashflow – i.e. should you save what little money you have, cut out the unnecessary expenditure and spread it about to make ends meet, or do you go out and get yourself a better job with more cash? – [DaveN](#) touched on the subject of [nofollow sculpting](#) with Matt Cutts recently and Matt offered up a similar analogy.

“Nofollowing your internals can affect your ranking in Google, but it's a 2nd order effect.

My analogy is: suppose you've got \$100. Would you rather work on getting \$300, or would you spend your time planning how to spend your \$100 more wisely.

Spending the \$100 more wisely is a matter of good site architecture (and nofollowing/sculpting PageRank if you want). But most people would benefit more from looking at how to get to the \$300 level.”

Should you **nofollow unimportant internal pages** or nofollow external links in an effort to consolidate the Pagerank you have already accrued?

Or should you spend your time getting other quality links pointing to your site to increase the PR you have to start off with (how you get Pagerank).

The long term best impact strategy here is simply to earn more, or you'll find it a slow rise above the core issues of your current predicament, whatever that may be, and I think the same can be said of the question of maximising page strength by PR sculpting.

Page 71

In truth you need to do both, maximise what page strength you have by whatever method you use to manipulate PR and on-site relevance, and linkbuild to add conviction to your attempt at making a particular page relevant and give it a shot at those first page rankings.

Page Rank Sculpting Discussions

Joost de Valk has a terrific [article on PR Sculpting](#), as does Dan Thies on using [nofollow to sculpt pagerank](#), and the [Mad Hat](#) pitches in on the FUD of [Nofollow being a red-flag](#) if you're trying to maximise the visibility of page in Google. [Michael Martinez](#) has an interesting take too.

I've used nofollow on internal links to sculpt and concentrate internal PR and from what I've seen the results **might** be promising, though very minimal, and not a long term substitute for an intelligent site architecture to begin with and certainly no [seo magic bullet](#), although you have to be careful.

I should point out I never use rel="nofollow" to **prevent** the indexing of a page – merely to control which pages any particular page shares it's [link equity](#) with, if you are Googlebot anyway.

It **appears** that the [first link](#) you nofollow on a page **might** also [nofollow any other link](#) to the same url on that page, although nofollowing the home page link high up in code (when you have another link to the home lower on the page) seems to be treated differently by Google, Yahoo and MSN. Wonder if a 'Contact' page is too?

Optimise Your Contact Page, Don't Nofollow It

As I have said, I've been playing about with rel="nofollow" on this site for 4 months, and in all honesty, in future, **I won't be relying on nofollow** to sculpt unimportant pages out of any possible [link graph](#), just optimising those pages better, or leaving them out altogether, like I used to do in 1999.

It can be a useful tool in a site redevelopment, but from here on in, I'll be keeping [nofollow for bad neighbourhoods](#) and, pending further testing, on top level blog pages, ~~using Andy Beard's~~ [Nofollow Dupes](#) although this site is still a linky love / dofollow blog (for regular contributors at any rate).

Update:

Nofollow has changed. - <http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/matt-cutts-kills-internal-pagerank-sculpting-with-nofollow/>

3rd Party Statistics

- 3rd Party Statistics are often inaccurate unless the website is actually participating with the 3rd party.
- 3rd party stats sites can be of use to determine popular content or popular keywords on a competitors site
- They can be used to determine popular keywords driving traffic to a competitors website
- Typically these sites buy their data from hosts, ISP and toolbars (like the better known Alexa Toolbar)
- Consider [Compete](#)
- Consider [Alexa](#)

Page Penalties / Filters

- Pages get penalised a lot more than sites do
- Don't optimise every available element of a page focused on one keyword
- Do not keyword stuff or Google will ignore your page entirely (especially on a less trusted site)
- Don't overuse a page title to cover too many keywords
- Don't overdo it with the same word in internal navigation and linkbuilding
- Bad words get filtered in Google safe search so careful which words you use or contributors add
- Watch out for boilerplate text and links in your template especially when they outweigh the single page content

Site Penalty

- Your site really does need unique content
- Sites can be penalised for particular keywords, typically if the site has a identifiable manufactured or worse, paid for, link profile
- Your entire site can be removed from Google if it contravenes Google webmaster guidelines
- Typically this is because your site has been hacked and links to malicious software injected into old code and scripts (watch contact forms)
- If your site is removed, you need to clean it all up and issue a re-inclusion request in Webmaster Tools
- Be careful getting sitewide links from most sites - IMO take a couple of links from strong pages on the site instead with varied anchor text

Competitor Research

- Examining established competitors can often reveal tactics you can use for your own site
- Find out where they get their back links
- What keywords they are targeting
- How they are keeping site visitors engaged
- Methods they use to convert visitors to sales
- Tip - Use Yahoo Link Operator to see who links to your competitors
- Use [Link diagnosis](#) for a quick way of checking for search engine friendly links to competitors

Unique Page Titles

- Highly relevant to the page content
- The ‘crown’ of a keyword targeted article with keyword once (maybe twice)
- Probably 5-12 words, but ideally under 70 characters, so the full title appears in Google SERPS (search engine results pages) but it depends on the page content - [character counter](#).
- A call to action which reflects and satisfies exactly a searcher’s intent (i.e. to learn something, or buy something, or hire something. Remember this is your hook in search engines!
- The perfect title tag is unique in relation to other pages on the site
- Google **displays 70 characters in its SERPS** and will truncate anything over this limit
- See more on [Google Page Titles](#).
- If Google for instance has an issue with your page title, it will ignore it and use the H1 tag (or another Header tag) as the page title in the Google SERP snippet.

Related Articles

What Is The Best Title Tag For Google?

I’m keeping these [1 A Day SEO Tips](#) in July quick and simple – and again, this is just my preference, backed up with observations I’ve made over the last few years I’ve been learning / practicing seo. This is the stuff people ask me on a daily basis at my [seo company](#) – *What Is The Best Title Tag For Google?*

<title>What Is The Best Title Tag For Google?</title>

Title Tag Best Practices

For me, a perfect title tag in Google is;

1. Highly **relevant** to the page
2. The ‘crown’ of a keyword targeted article with keyword once
3. Probably 5-12 words, but ideally under the 70 characters limit, so the full title appears in Google SERPS (search engine results pages) but it depends on the page content – [character counter](#).
4. A call to action which reflects exactly a searcher’s intent (i.e. to learn something, or buy something, or hire something. Remember this is your *hook* in search engines!
5. The perfect title tag is unique in relation to other pages on the site
6. I like to ensure my [keywords feature as early as possible in a title tag](#)
7. For me, the company name goes at the end of the tag, and I use a variety of dividers as no one way performs best
8. I like to think I write titles for search engines and human
9. Know that Google tweaks everything regularly – why not what the perfect title keys off?

10. Don't obsess! Natural is better, and will only 'get better' as engines evolve
11. I think the more unique a title is relative to the site, the better in the long run. For instance, I'm probably going to change the title of our blog, to just 'Hobo' – one word. If all my titles were different and had ten words, that's a 90% variation title to title. I like this and will be moving towards it. I would *expect* Google to reward this lol

Note;

When you write a page title, you have a chance right at the beginning of the page to tell Google if this is a spammy site or a quality site – for example – have you repeated the keyword 4 times or only once? I think title tags, like everything else, should probably be as simple as possible too, with the keyword once and perhaps a related term if possible.

I think it's fair to surmise Google might treat title tags (or title elements) on more authoritative domains differently than on new sites, too, that is, as with other things, more trusted domains might get away with more spammy titles, but from a user point of view and with **searcher intent** (and Google's commitment to this) at the forefront, I'd try and keep things as simple and looking as human-generated and unique as possible.

I'm certainly cleaning up the way I write my titles all the time. How do you do it?

H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 H6 Tags

- Headings are good for accessibility and readability - Consider [Headings Correct Use](#)
- there's no evidence I know of that headings are very useful for Google SEO
- it is however one of the marks of a well structured page
- I regularly use Header tags
- See this website headings starter guide
- The H1 and H2 elements are reinforcing signals for the relevance of a web page. They are not a magic bullet, but in tight competitive situations, they might help a page to rank better than a custom styled text will. One of many, many signals that Google watches.
- Heading elements are a best practice, IMO - there's no reason not to use them, and they enforce a kind of semantic discipline on your page template. You can use CSS to style them any way you need to fit with your page's visual needs.
- Google uses the [next level of Header if for some reason it elects to ignore your Page Title](#)

Related Articles

Proper Use Of H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 header elements

The six heading elements, H1 through H6, denote section headings. Although the order and occurrence of headings is not constrained by the HTML DTD, documents should not skip levels (for example, from H1 to H3), as converting such documents to other representations is often problematic. **W3C**

However you do not need to use all six elements to structure your pages.

For example:

```
<H1>Accessibility Web Design </H1>
<p>Here is some text</p>
<H2>HTML</H2>
<p>Here is some text</p>
<H2>CSS</H2>
<p>Here is some text</p>
```

Use Only One H1 Element on any page

Accessibility 101 uses the **header elements** as explained above, and generally only reach level H3 as each page is a concise investigation of one topic. **We only use one H1 element per page.** However the following is also semantically correct:

```
<H1>The Universe - It's Big</H1>
<H2>Our Milky Way Galaxy</H2>
<H3>Our Local Group of Stars</H3>
<H4>Our Solar System</H4>
```


<H5>Little Old Earth</H5>
<H6>Bonny Scotland</H6>

You can use any number of H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 Elements on any page

You can use any number of H2-H6 elements on any one page, but this might be a bit cumbersome for the typical web designer.

So as you can see there is a few definitive ways to implement these elements. We would recommend that possibly you keep your pages specific about one topic and use

- One H1 Element (tag as it is commonly talked about)
- As many as required H2 elements to denote sections on the page (you should really only need one or two or 3 if you are keeping your page concise.
- Consider using H3 Elements for useful link groups to other relevant sources, or for information not immediately relevant to the page and so "3rd" in the pecking order.

Search Engines & H1 Elements

It has been argued that the main search engines pay more attention to H1 elements these days, so you might want to consider this when creating your pages, and include your best keywords in it.

Use <h1> for top-level heading

<h1> is the HTML element for the first-level heading of a document:

- If the document is basically stand-alone, for example Things to See and Do in Scotland, the top-level heading is probably the same as the title.
- If it is part of a collection, for example a section on Dogs in a collection of pages about pets, then the top level heading should assume a certain amount of context; just write <h1>Dogs</h1> while the title should work in any context: Dogs - Your Guide to Pets.

Unlike the title, this element can include links, emphasis and other HTML phrase elements.

The default font size for <h1> in some browsers have, unfortunately, motivated many writers and tools to use an <h2> element instead. This is misleading to tools that take advantage of heading structure of pages, such as Amaya's table of contents view.

Consider using Cascading Style Sheets, which are designed to express the author's preferred font sizes corresponding to elements such as <h1> and <h2>, like we have done here in Accessibility 101.

Remember:

The six heading elements, H1 through H6, denote section headings. Although the order and occurrence of headings is not constrained by the HTML DTD, documents should not skip levels (for example, from H1 to H3), as converting such documents to other representations is often problematic. **W3C**

Meta Descriptions

- It's highly debated whether Meta Descriptions actually help rankings
- It's possible Google uses meta descriptions to determine relevance but it does not return unique text in SERPS results if it is not on the page (why some think Google are ignoring it)
- Write meta descriptions for humans with the keyword in it so Google displays it in results
- [Keep meta descriptions under 160 characters](#)
- On longer tail searches Google attempts to display more than 160 characters to get more out of sites it already trusts rather than have you dig down into spammy depths of the SERPS
- A good meta description with the keywords in it can be the difference between a visitor clicking your snippet in the SERPS or not - make it a call to action especially on important pages.

Related Articles

Create The Perfect Meta Description For Google (& Searchers)

Like the [title element](#) and **unlike** the [meta keywords tag](#), this one is important, both from a human and search engine perspective.

```
<meta name="Description" content="Get your site on the first page of Google, Yahoo and MSN too, using simple search engine optimisation. Call us on 0845 094 0839. A company based in Scotland." />
```

Forget whether or not to put your keyword in it, make it relevant to a searcher and write it for humans, not search engines. If you want to have this 20 word snippet which accurately describes the page you have optimised for one or two keyword phrases when people use Google to search, make sure the keyword is in there.

I must say, I normally do include the keyword in the description, but I think it would be a fair guess to think more trusted sites would benefit more from any boost a keyword in the meta description tag might have, than an untrusted site would.

Google looks at the description but there is debate whether it actually uses the description tag to rank sites. I think they might at some level, but again, a very weak signal.

Sometimes I will ask a question with my titles, and answer it in the description, sometimes I will just give a hint;

What's The Best Keyword Meta Tags Formula? | Hobo

2 Jul 2008 ... I wouldn't waste 2 minutes optimising my **keyword meta** tags for search engines.

www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/keyword-meta-tags/ - 40 minutes ago -

[Similar pages](#)

It's also very important in my opinion to have *unique title tags* and **unique meta descriptions** on every page on your site. It's a preference of mine, but I don't generally autogenerate descriptions with my cms of choice either – normally I'll elect to remove the tag entirely before I do this, and my pages still do well (and Google generally pulls a decent snippet out on its own which you can then go back and optimise for serps 😊).

Tin Foil Hat Time

Sometimes I think if your titles are spammy, your keywords are spammy, and your meta description is spammy, Google might stop right there – even they probably will want to save bandwidth at some time 😊

Putting a keyword in the description won't take a crap site to number 1 or raise you 50 spots in a competitive niche – so why optimise for a search engine when you can optimise for a human? – I think that is much more valuable, if you are in the mix.

So, the meta description tag is important in Google, Yahoo and MSN and every other engine listing – very important to get it right. Make it for humans.

Oh and by the way – Google seems to truncate anything over 160 characters in the meta description. 😊

What Is Nofollow

- rel="nofollow"
- A [link condom](#), nofollow effectively tells Google not to pass any benefit of any kind
- Nofollow links don't pass link 'juice' like anchor text benefits, pagerank or trust
- [Google wants you to use nofollow](#) on links you don't know you can trust and for paid links
- When getting links to your site, ensure they are not links with the nofollow tag present - it won't help you at all in terms of Google placement.

Keyword Density

- There is no probably NO optimal keyword density
- I don't think KWD is used as a metric
- Keyword prominence, placement and repetition is most definitely a factor at some level, but not keyword density
- Consider this article on the Hobo site where we asked a great many SEO experts, writers and bloggers if they used [Keyword density](#) as a ranking measurement - NO was the consensus
- I have tested it - I can't find its use anyway

Related Articles

[Keyword Density](#) | [Keyword Density Tools](#) | [SEO Myths](#)

I asked some of the world's top [seo](#) people and bloggers what they thought about *Keyword Density* after talking privately with;

[Tedster](#)



Hi Shaun, Did you catch my little provocation in the [SEOMoz interview](#)? My point of view may not be the majority opinion among webmasters, but I came to it by studying data from the SERPs (there's quite a wide variation in keyword density) and by reading the search engine patents of recent years. That especially includes Google's [six phrase-based indexing patents](#), as we discussed on [WebmasterWorld](#)

And now for some history. In the 90s this idea caught fire that there was a movable "sweet spot" in the ranking algorithms for keyword density. The idea was that the dial would get turned all the time, especially at [AltaVista](#) – which was the "do or die" place to rank in those days. Some early SEO software attempted to reverse engineer the various theoretical sweet spots in the algorithms on a monthly basis – for density, prominence, occurrence and other factors.

That was the 90s, with search engine algorithms that were dumb as a doorpost. Whether any of them really used keyword density as a direct metric I can't say with certainty – but I even doubt that. At any rate, today's algorithms handle keyword stuffing abuses almost as a side effect of the many elements they are processing. They don't even NEED to take a direct measurement.

This doesn't mean that a density tool can't give a webmaster some useful feedback. It can alert you when you go way overboard and don't realize it. Likewise, you'll get a wake-up call if you overlook having even a single use of your target keyword in text.

With so many keyword density tools online to attract eyeballs, this idea seems to be a myth that will not die. Many webmasters swear by it and just assume that density is somehow a sophisticated SEO tool that they must use to succeed online.

But among professional SEOs, you won't usually hear such talk. For example, Rand Fishkin and I see eye to eye on this. Check out this article on [SEOMoz](#), where he surveyed 37 prominent SEOs about [search engine ranking factors](#). The word "density" is not even on the page!

Brett Tabke



Like everything in search – it has evolved. I think the old kw density calc is the new **proximity calc**.

- If the keyword isn't on the page – it isn't going to rank well (or at all) for that keyword.
- If the keyword isn't in the title of the page, it is going to be tougher to rank for that keyword.
- If the keyword isn't in the url, the task becomes more difficult.
- What about in a big header on the page?
- What about high on the page, or strategically spaced throughout the document?
- Offsite density? [Anchor text](#) is another type of density.

I think keyword density needs to be changed to proximity density. It is closer heat map today than the pure numbers game of old.

Rand Fishkin: *'Modern Search Engine's Have Never Used Keyword Density'*



Shaun – the truth is simply that modern search engines have never used keyword density. Look through any intro to information retrieval course in any university on the planet and you'll see that it's been debunked as a high-cost, low return metric. Instead, they use term weight – TF*IDF – check out some good work on the subject from Dr. Edel Garcia (one of the few information retrieval scientists whose crossed over into [seo](#)):

- [Keyword Density – Revisiting An SEO Myth](#)
- [Keyword Density SEO And The Deception War](#)
- [Keyword Density Optimization](#)
- [Term Vector](#)
- [Term Weight & Glasgow Weight vs. Keyword Density](#)
- [Admitting I Was Wrong](#)
- [Great Site For Learning About Term Weight](#)

Aaron Wall: **'Keyword Density is an Over-rated Concept'**



I think keyword density is an over-rated concept. Even with similar keyword densities one page may rank while another does not. And that's true even if they have the same link profile. That in and of itself should show the (lack of) value of keyword density.

To explain how that concept works, consider a page that uses the exact same keywords at the start of the page title, at the start of their h1 tag, and in all their inbound anchor text. It may get filtered for being too closely aligned with the target keyword. Now imagine that the same page is redone, shifting word order in some spots, shifting singular to plural in some spots. Now the same page may not get filtered even if it has the same or similar keyword density.

Keyword density also has two toxic side effects. Some people write what ends up sounding like robotic copy. Others, in an attempt to increase keyword density, end up editing out important keyword modifiers and semantically related phrases, which not only lowers their traffic (since they took many relevant words off the page), but also makes their page look less like other top ranked pages.

Ruud Hein: ‘The idea of keyword density has the attractiveness of the flat earth argument: it “just makes sense” and “everyone can see it for himself!’



It seems common sense that a document about Google will use the word Google more often while a document about Yahoo will use the word Yahoo more often. It also seems common sense that there should be some kind of cut-off point after which things don't become more relevant upon repetition but instead become spam.

In other words: there must be an optimum ratio of keywords: words. Keyword density! Ta-da!

The idea: if you are within a certain range, the “sweet spot”, you're relevant. Under it and you're irrelevant. Over it and it's spam.

There are some clues we can use to figure out if our “well, it must be so” observations are correct or not.

A very compelling clue is that search engines are in the science of information retrieval — and that in the science of information retrieval keyword density doesn't play a role. Apart from academic “proof of (non) concept” models, there are no information retrieval models based on keyword density, certainly not commercial ones. This should be more than a clue to us. It should be an annoyingly loud alarm bell: if I reason with the theory of keyword density but the very science behind search engines doesn't give that theory any credibility ... am I still on the right path?

Another clue comes from thinking about the words we use. One document has a keyword density of 3.25%, another a keyword density of 0.05%. Which one would be in the relevant keyword density range? ... Now what if I were to tell you that the 0.05% keyword is mataeotechny (an unprofitable art or science... like keyword density), a word that appears 55 times on the web (56 times now...)? Some words “weigh” more, “mean” more simply because they're less used than others. The theory of keyword density as a prediction model of relevancy fails terribly here, giving enormous weight to commonly used words and hardly any to rare words.

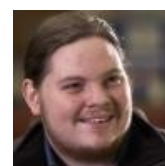
Yet another clue is the formula to arrive at “relevant” keyword density. That formula goes “number of keywords on words” then some magic happens “is relevant or not”.

If keyword density were to be used to provide some kind of cut-off point, some kind of spam filter.... how would the cut-off point be calculated? By calculating the keyword density of every document, then taking the means of that? But what about our mataeotechny example? Oh, you would like to account for words that appear less often in the index? You just left the keyword density building and crossed the street into term weights.

If your gut keeps telling you this just has to be true, I recommend reading and rereading the articles by Dr. E. Garcia until you either “get it” or can show for yourself where he blunders.

Tim Nash:

Shaun – Repetition of keywords seems to have at least some effect on the rankings for those terms, particularly when combined with other factors such as the use of heading tags and title tag. However the effect is quickly lost if you stuff the keywords.



If you imagine that the glass can only contain a finite amount of liquid and your keywords are separate glasses, the more keywords the more glasses how you divvy up the liquid is almost irrelevant as you still have only a certain amount of liquid to start with.

Lyndon Antcliff: ‘I don’t do it mathematically’

Yes and no. I don’t do it mathematically, but I make sure the keyword is there, and in the title and h1 tags etc.



I guess I have done it long enough I don’t really think about. I think the antonyms and synonyms are more important than density, in fact there are a number of factors which are.

But I think it’s best not to obsess and concentrate on a natural feel , if that is achieved correct keyword density will come naturally.

Sebastian: ‘Optimal keyword density is a myth’

Oh well, I thought that thingy was beaten to death already. “**Optimal keyword density**” is a myth.



Today’s search engines are way too smart to fall for such poor optimization methods.

Even a single inbound link with a good anchor text can boost a page lacking the keyword in question so that it outranks every page with tuned keyword density.

Paul Stevens



Focus more on writing good relative content, proper page structure and decent link building than keyword density. I remember when I first started in [SEO](#), I had an Desktop Software Application checking my pages and telling me that I was short in my keyword density. So I stuffed more keywords in till the application was happy.

Then I released it into the search engines. The page never really ranked that highly. What was worse the client wasn't too happy that his page read crap as well. I've never looked at keyword density since.

[Barry Welford](#); 'Keyword density gets less and less relevant all the time...'

Hi Shaun – Happy to get involved. Keyword density gets less and less relevant all the time, at least for Google with Latent Semantic Analysis, Personalized Search, etc., etc.



Most results come from the 'long tail' of combinations of keywords. What counts is conversions to sales, if that's your real business objective. Poorly executed SEO may even work against conversions if it turns off human prospects.

[John Carcutt](#); 'Natural language seems to fare just as well if not better'

Ask around; what is the best keyword density for a web page to rank well for a given term? Searching on the internet I found answers ranging from 2% to 12% and one as high as 20%. The interesting thing is they could all be right.



The one thing many people fail to take into consideration when looking for this magical number is the idea that it changes based on factors related to the page or search term. Additionally, its importance in the algorithm may also fluctuate based on external influences. Instead of hunting for that perfect density, it may help to better understand what part keywords play in getting a page ranked.

I shouldn't have to say it, but unfortunately I do; a keyword or phrase needs to be on the page in order to rank well for the term. Can a page rank if the term is not on the page? Sure if it has inbound links using the terms, but it's not going to rank very well on those alone. Using the keyword or phrase in a variety of ways throughout a page will greatly increase the chances of showing up higher in the rankings for that term.

Now back to density... Proper keyword density is a moving target. Two main factors are the total amount of words on a page and the competitiveness of the phrase in the engines.

When there are very few words on a page 6% density is a tough target to hit and make the copy readable. However, when the page has a large amount of copy 6% is much more manageable. When analyzing a page 6% of 1000 words may seem much less "spammy" than 6% of 100 words. The optimal keyword density of a page will change based on how many total words are on the page.

If a keyword phrase is unique and the competition in the search engines is low, a much lower or much higher keyword density may work just fine. The overall effect density has on search results is much broader when there is little or no competition. As the competition for a phrase increases, the keyword density target becomes more critical. Ironically, the density also plays a smaller and smaller part in ranking as the competition for a phrase increases.

To be fair, I tell people on a regular basis to target a 4% keyword density on a page. I do this primarily to get them thinking about how to use keywords on a page. I find having a set target is a good motivator and really helps a webmaster or site owner to understand the importance of targeting a page to a specific phrase or set of words.

The hunt for the perfect keyword density is slowing down as more people realize natural language seems to fare just as well if not better in the search engine results. If you understand the fundamentals of targeting a page for a phrase, there is no reason to worry about keyword density. Just write good copy.

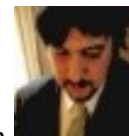
Brendan Picha



Keyword density plays a significant role in ranking but like your meta data, domain age, backlinks, anchor text, or any other aspect of your page and domain, how your page ranks is always determined by the sum of its parts. Surrounding content and the amount of times in which your keyword phrase appears says a lot about the page and what it means. In fact, it should be obvious that it's one of the most important indicators.

Using simple techniques such as bolding your phrase or placing it within H2 tags will stress the importance of this phrase when your page is being crawled. Other things to consider would be placement within the page's URL, title, description, and linking your phrase to a site that also speaks to the content you're creating. Be sure not to over-do-it however. If you're keyword stuffing and it looks spammy to you then the chances of it looking spammy to a bot are probably pretty high. After you create your page you can use a simple density checking tool like <http://www.ranks.nl/tools/spider.html> to see how often your phrase is showing up.

Bill Slawski; 'more likely folklore than fact'



Shaun – Just for a different perspective, I took a look at the USPTO database, which only goes back to the early 2000s, and at Google Scholar.

There are 15 granted patents and 48 patent applications that use the phrase “keyword density.” None of those are from Google or Yahoo, and only a very few are from Microsoft and IBM, which also work in enterprise search. A number of the patent filings were applied for by Overture around the time of their acquisition by Yahoo, but focus upon paid search, referring to keyword density as something that non paid search may be using.

Google Scholar reveals 208 instances of the phrase “keyword density,” and none of the documents listed appear to come from anyone working at a major search engine, though a 2006 paper from a Lycos researcher suggests the use of keyword density.

I’ve always considered keyword density to be more likely folklore than fact. I don’t think that will change.

Jim Boykin; ‘not a good metric for SEO’

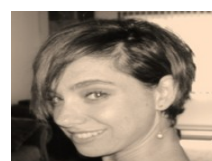
“keyword Density” (using a ratio of keywords to the total text on a page) is not a good metric for SEO anymore.



Yes, your keywords should be on the page...but beyond that, writing “naturally” is better SEO than worrying about keyword density.

Shana Albert; ‘I don’t use a calculator’

Personally, I don’t use a calculator... nor do I don’t count the words in my post, but I am careful about the keywords I choose and I do eyeball my posts to see how long it is roughly. I’ve been a Webmaster enough years now that I don’t need to calculate the amount of words in my articles to know roughly how many keywords I would need to make the keyword density about right.



I have found that if I worry about the amount of times that a keyword or key phrase needs to appear throughout one of my posts or articles then my writing doesn’t flow very well. And, if my articles don’t flow well.... I’m going to lose my readers. If the people arriving on one of my sites don’t enjoy reading my work it doesn’t really matter if readers can find my in the serps or not.... they won’t be sticking around long enough to finish reading my choppy, non-flowing article. So, I try to worry less about keywords and more about content.

Don’t get me wrong.... I still think about keyword density. It’s just not my main focus....the content is. I come up with the keyword(s) I want to focus on in my post and then write. If I need to tweak my post with more or less keywords once it’s written.... I do so then.

Tad Chef; ‘I stopped “measuring” keyword density years ago’

I stopped “measuring” keyword density years ago. Instead I concentrated on keyword placement on the page using a rule of thumb stating that 3 instances of a keyword in the page copy is the minimum plus one for each 100 additional words you write makes sense. So I focused on the “where in the copy” using the keyword in the first sentence of the of the first paragraph etc. A year ago Google introduced the “Google bomb filter” which in practice checks if a page that is linked with a certain anchor text also contains this keyword.



At the end of 2007 I could test this as a client of mine was unable to grant me access to his site for internal reasons and I had to start with off site optimization first. He did not rank at all

for the keywords I did link building for as long as the pages I linked did not contain the keywords.

So it is obvious that you still have to tell Google on the page what it is actually about. So you might want to check out which terms or words are the most used on your page. On the other hand you should always think of the user first as some terms just aren't suitable to be repeated too much. Google does an increasingly good job at identifying synonyms, acronyms and different spellings as one and the same term. So try to sound natural above all as otherwise the engine will find you but your visitors will bounce. Btw. Yahoo does not like high keyword density at all.

Matt Ridout; 'I never *calculate* the keyword density'

This is a topic I've heard a lot about from all corners of the web and everyone seems to have a varied opinion on it. I can only base by answer on my personal experience and my clients experience.



Is it a myth – no. If you want to rank for a keyword it obviously needs to be visible on the page, this should be a common understanding. Not just in the body copy but tagged appropriately and in the page title, description etc.

I never calculate the keyword density at all, it's like saying to an artist you have too much red on your canvas, use a calculator to work out how much more to add or subtract from the painting. If you follow simple seo guidelines and do good keyword research you should be fine. At the end of the day it's about the user experience on your site that you should be concentrating on, and stuffing a page full of keywords will just take something away from their experience and could harm your brand.

Bill Hartzler; 'I don't spend a lot of time measuring keyword density'

At this point in the game, in 2008, I don't spend a lot of time measuring keyword density. I believe that, overall, there are a lot of other factors that weight in just as much—if not more—than keyword density.



If you feel that you need to measure it, I would take a look at the current search results pages: measure the keyword density of the top 5-10 pages that are ranking well and get an average. I wouldn't go too much higher or too much lower than what the average keyword density is on those pages that are already ranking well.

But again, I recently overheard a search engineer say, "keyword density is the biggest myth out there right now."

Hamlet Batista; 'two fundamental flaws'

I don't believe modern search engines use keyword density as one of their query-dependent ranking factors. Keyword density, as we know it, has two fundamental flaws:



1. Keyword density is only a local weight. The fact that a word appears many times on a specific page doesn't help much in telling what is the page about when comparing it to other pages in the index. For example, what if the word that repeats the most is "www"? Google counts 21,940,000,000 documents with that word. That is probably not what most of those pages are about.
2. Keyword density is easily manipulated by enough repetition.

I believe, as explained by Dr Garcia, that what search engines really use is term/keyword weights. Term weights don't have the same flaws keyword density has.

Keyword weights are computed by : $KW = Local * Global * Normalization$.

1. Keyword weights consider both local and global weights. A phrase that appears many times in a document but also appears in many other documents should have less weight than one that doesn't appear as often. We can call this "rarity". The only way search engines can tell documents apart is by paying attention to what words make them different. This is possible thanks to the Global component of that equation.
2. Keyword weights are normalized. In order to avoid the difference in document sizes and repetition issues, weights are normalized. That is, their values are replaced by corresponding (directly proportional) values between 0 and 1.

The vector space model is one approach that has been explained as a way to measure the term weights. The cosine similarity is a very interesting concept that if/when current search engines implement it, we will see search results where the keywords do not appear in the content of the page or the text in the links pointing to the page. I personally don't think vector space model is currently in use in modern search engines. The size of the vectors to make such computations at query time is simply too big. PageRank computation uses matrices of massive size, but PageRank is query-independent and it is pre-computed before any query is performed.

From the SEO point of view, I do see some limited use for keyword density, though. Let's say for example, when you are simply comparing a single page to another for a very specific keyword you are targeting. Remember that when search engines compute the weights they are trying to determine the relevance of each page; but when we see the page ranking we already know that. So, we only need to determine why the search engine deemed that page important for that particular phrase. Assuming off-page factors are the same/similar, the keyword density can be useful in figuring that out as the term weight will be directly proportional.

Comparing top ten pages, averaging their values and thinking about a perfect keyword density of x% is definitely a waste of time.

[Kevin Heisler](#); 'Is Keyword Density Shite?'

hmmmm..... [Is "keyword density" shite?](#) I love that term. Write shite in exactly



Page 93

2.5 percent of the total words in your post and you'll rank number one for "shite."

That's the basis for keyword density. Obviously, every document has a specific keyword density for any given keyword. That doesn't mean that Google has weighted each word so that tweaks in word number would always improve rankings.

The best any SEO can do? Test, make a hypothesis, test again. Even with multiple reiterations, the test would still only provide anecdotal evidence KD matters. Plus, there's no way to isolate KD – or any element – from all the variables of a test, as well as the dynamic natural search landscape. Do your [seo](#) competitors have zero impact on your SEO tactics?

The effectiveness of optimizing metadata elements always stimulates great debates. What's unique about KD? Keyword density ostensibly has an "optimal" percentage. That's one reason why the KD theory is so often ridiculed.

The most-cited debunking of the myth, The Keyword Density of Non-Sense, was written by Dr. Edel Garcia (Orion), whose good friend, Mike Grehan, asked him after SES New York (2005) to do something about the unproven [KD theories](#) swirling around.

You can find the study in Mike Grehan's newsletter, then co-authored with Christine Churchill, CEO of Key Relevance.

Garcia wrote an analysis combining IR (information retrieval), semantics and math but "no conclusion so readers could draw their own."

Nacho Hernandez brought this article to Rand Fishkin's attention in the Search Engine Watch Forums. [Rand's reaction here](#). Rand was 90 days into developing a keyword density tool to measure on-page term weight. After reading Orion's article, he concluded "only an extraordinary budget and very talented programmer could build such a thing."

There's a grain of truth in keyword density theory: Google does look at keyword density in spam reduction, setting an undefined upper limit on keyword stuffing. Michael Gray has even debunked that concept with anecdotal evidence, [showing how insanely high keyword density can rank high](#).

[Sexy SEO](#): 'Snake Oil SEO'

Keyword Density? Why don't you ask about meta tags or submit robots instead? Do you think I am ancient enough to remember that mouldy question of early 90ies? Well, believe me I am not! But I have something to say, but only if you ask. Honestly, it's a great gimmick of all those [snake oil SEOs](#) who hit their customers and run away with their dollars. Yes, the concept is easy to grasp and even the dumbest of the dumb will see that you are doing some work on their site. Yes, it might possibly push the page in question 10 positions up in SERPS from page 2000 to page 1999. Your customer will even see the result this way. Ugly, dirty, but it works. Great concept.

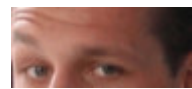


Now seriously, if 10 years ago it might have been one of just about a dozen factors counted by SE in their ranking algos, nowadays they'd become a way more sophisticated. Certainly it never harms to have your target keywords in the text of your page and preferably not in one sentence, but that's ABC of SEO. It sometimes helps to have one keyword of a pair to be repeated much more often than the second one. And no doubts you should use your target keywords in URL, Title, meta tags etc but that's not even KD proper.

How would you see the degree in which on-site optimization decreased over the past 10 years? Now how about on-page optimization? Well, the importance of KD as a ranking factor decreased proportionally, and even if some might find this fact to a bit inconvenient for their sales tactics, it's still stands as a fact.

No time-wasters next time please!

Wiep Knoll; 'better to focus on keyword presence'



Instead of looking at keyword density, I think it's better to focus on keyword presence. Make sure that you've put the keyword(s) you're targeting in your page's title tag, meta description and in the content part.

Don't stuff in extra keywords just to get that magic 3,22% or 7,08% keyword density (or whatever percentage you're aiming to get), but make it look natural instead.

If you let someone else read the text and he or she thinks it's a good read and can explain exactly what the page is about, you're probably ok. The anchor texts of incoming links and the surrounding text of those links will do the rest...

Brian Clark; 'KD a non-factor'



As far as I'm concerned, keyword density is a non-factor. I'm not saying the algorithms don't take it into account at all, but I am saying it's a bit fruitless to even worry about. Plus, in this day and age of the link and conversion mattering most, worrying about keyword density when you should be focusing on clear, actionable copy seems to be beside the point.

Keyword frequency matters to a certain degree, one would think. But again, if your writing comes off stilted and awkward, you're shooting yourself in the foot. Pay attention to titles and subheads, and creatively make the keywords and copy flow at those crucial points. Then go back and read the rest afterwards.

If your keywords and a few choice synonyms didn't show up naturally in the body text, you're probably not covering the topic all that well.

Brian Turner; 'Do I use keyword density? No'



Re: Keyword density: It's always important to properly utilise keywords on a

page in such a way as to describe

1. the meaning of the page,
2. the uniqueness of the page, and
3. the action required for users (if any) on the page.

Google & co have published various pages over the years that show that:

1. they understand that there are linguistic relationships between certain types of words, whether between individual keywords or even acronyms, and
2. block analysis should be presumed to be already in play, so work as though search engines can determine the meaning not simply of paragraphs, but also of individual blocks of text.

Page copy should ideally look to justify the keywords in the titles, headers, and further links by directly referencing these in the text, plus related keywords as required, and all in a format that enhances readability for human users in the relevant text areas of a page.

Do I use keyword density? No – I think the aim is to write intelligent copy and it's important to bear in mind the impact of major ranking factors such as domain authority, page titles, and links (on-page and off-page).

If non-SEO's try to focus on keyword density I think they are more likely to both overlook these, and additionally treat keyword density as nothing more than a way to reduce useful pages into unreadable spam that denigrates the user experience, have little or no ranking impact, and prevent the page from converting as intended.

However, if a really good [seo](#) copywriter uses any particular method in their craft, I'm not going to denigrate it – the most important thing in my opinion is simply a successful outcome, regardless if any part of the process may seem esoteric to outsiders.

[Hobo](#)

I don't think I've tested it since 2001, if it's in the links, anchor text, title and on the page that's good enough. I never calculate keyword density, I never use keyword density tools or density checkers – if I have time to calculate this I should have time to look at more rewarding areas of site optimisation or authority building.



I expand my thoughts about keyword density [here](#) but feel free to add your comment below.

Hmmmm I wonder if I used 'Keyword Density' enough in this blog post (**Insert%**) 😊

[Andy Beard:](#)

It is not really my thing because with blogs, if you have a keyword in the title, your keyword density changes depending on comments and trackbacks including



the words.

If you don't use a description, and even when you do, you quite often end up with the text for a trackback appearing in the snippet.

If you really want to maintain density, you can use a commenting system such as [Disqus](#), but then your comments are hosted on a different domain, and you lose the benefit of the long tail and update frequency.

Keyword Research

- Keyword Research is a pivotal aspect of seo
- Examine competition - see what they are targeting
- Consider the [Google Keyword Tool](#) or Wordtracker for analysis
- Manual keyword research techniques are best
- Optimise keywords specific to a very targeted user groups intent

Linking To Other Sites

- Link out to other related sites at least on certain pages on your site
- It's thought this may help define your site in a neighbourhood
- Linking out to relevant pages may increase the quality of your page as a resource - it might even help your own rankings in some way
- Be careful to link to only sites you trust in some way, although your site is unlikely to be tarnished in this manner if you make the odd link to a shady neighbourhood
- [Check links for link rot](#) - links that break over time

Robots Meta Tag

- You do not need a [robots meta tag](#)
- The robots meta tag can be used on a page level to tell search engines not to reveal the page content in search engines.
- It can be used to tell Google not to rank the content but take into account the links on the page
- Example (consider <http://noarchive.net/> for more):
<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, FOLLOW">
<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, NOFOLLOW">
<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="INDEX, NOFOLLOW">

Robots TXT File

- You do not need a [Robots.txt](#) file, but I use them to try and prevent Google indexing particular parts of my sites
- [Offers some measure of control](#) of search engines when they crawl your website
- Read the [beginners guide to Robots.txt](#)
- If you want to read about Robots.txt, read [Sebastians Pamphlets](#)
- Recently there has been some discussion on Twitter about Robots TXT and Robots Meta - See this [roundup on Sphinn](#)

Related Articles

[Beginners Guide To Robots.txt Files](#) | [Sebastian X Sebastians Pamphlets](#)

Hobo – Right Sebastian! What do you think you are doing calling me out on a slight bit of “misinformation” on a post I made for a bit of branding. Just who do you think you are spamming my content with useful, original and interesting content?

Don’t you realize that @ 1,500 stumblers and Twitters visited my site as a result of this slapping?? You trying to discredit me? 😏

Sebastian – Howdy Shaun, – I’m so sorry that I [discredited](#) you, that was really not my intention.

I couldn’t resist coz [robots.txt](#) is kinda pet peeve of mine. Thanks for the opportunity to spam your neat blog with my ~~links~~ thoughts, though. 😊

Hobo: That post was about how expert SEO people were using Robots.txt – I should have put a disclaimer at the bottom saying I didn’t know a thing about Robots.txt files and that I had nicked mine some time ago from [Michael Gray](#) and forgot about it. And spam my blog all you like with that kind of content, although I’ve got [Lucia’s Linky Love](#) installed so generally Spam doesn’t get much of a foothold about these parts (actually I am not even sure if that is working properly).

OK – you seem to know what you’re on about when it comes to robots.txt. Fancy educating me and the [Hobo](#) team as to what you’ve learned and know about these often misunderstood files? You know, all that stuff that took you years to learn, Let me have it....now!

Hobo – WTF is a Robots.txt file, Sebastian, in simple idiot’s terms?

Well, the “idiot’s version” will lack interesting details, but it will get you started.

Robots.txt is a plain text file. **You must not** edit it with HTML editors, word processors, nor any applications other than **a plain text editor** like vi (Ok, notepad.exe is allowed too). You shouldn’t embed images and such, also any other HTML code is strictly forbidden.

Hobo – Why shouldn't I edit it with my Dreamweaver FTP client, for instance?

Because all those fancy apps insert useless crap like formatting, HTML code and whatnot. Most probably search engines aren't capable to interpret a robots.txt file like:

```
<!DOCTYPE text/plain PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD TEXT 1.0 Transitional//Swahili"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/text/DTD/plain1-transitional.dtd">
{\b\lang2057\langfe1031\langnp2057\insrsid6911344\charrsid11089941 User-
agent: Googlebot}{
\lang2057\langfe1031\langnp2057\insrsid6911344\charrsid11089941 \line
Disallow: / \line Allow:
}{\cs15\i\lang2057\langfe1031\langnp2057\insrsid6911344\charrsid290309 5
/}{\i\lang2057\langfe1031\langnp2057\insrsid6911344\charrsid2903095
content}{
\cs15\i\lang2057\langfe1031\langnp2057\insrsid6911344\charrsid2903095 /}
...
```

(Ok Ok, I've made up this example, but it represents the raw contents of text files saved with HTML editors and word processors.)

Hobo – Where Do I put the damn thing?

Robots.txt resides in the root directory of your Web space, that's either a domain or a subdomain, for example “/web/user/htdocs/example.com/robots.txt” resolving to <http://example.com/robots.txt>.

Can I use Robots.txt in sub directories?

Of course you're free to create robots.txt files in all your subdirectories, but you shouldn't expect search engines to request/obey those. If you for some weird reasons use subdomains like crap.example.com, then the example.com/robots.txt is not exactly a suitable instrument to steer crawling of subdomains, hence ensure each subdomain serves its own robots.txt.

When you upload your robots.txt then make sure to do it in ASCII mode, your FTP client usually offers “ASCII|Auto|Binary” – choose “ASCII” even when you've used an ANSI editor to create it.

Hobo – Why?

Because plain text files contain ASCII content only. Sometimes standards that say “upload *.htm *.php *.txt .htaccess *.xml files in ASCII mode to prevent them from inadvertently corruption during the transfer, storing with invalid EOL codes, etc.” do make sense. (You've asked for the idiot version, didn't you?)

Hobo – What about if I am on a Free Host?

If you're on a [free host](#), robots.txt is not for you. Your hosting service will create a read-only robots.txt “file” that's suitable to steal even more traffic than its ads that you can't remove from your headers and footers.

Now, if you're still interested in the topic, you must learn how search engines work to understand what you can archive with a robots.txt file and what's just myths posted on your favorite forum.

Hobo – Sebastian, Do you know how search engines work, then?

Yep, to some degree. 😊 Basically, a search engine has three major components:

1. A crawler that burns your bandwidth fetching your unchanged files over and over until you're belly up.
2. An indexer that buries your stuff unless you're [Matt Cutts](#) or blog on a [server that gained search engine love](#) making use of the cruellest black hat tactics you can think of.
3. A query engine that accepts search queries and pulls results from the search index but ignores your stuff coz you're neither me nor Matt Cutts.

Hobo – What goes into the robots.txt file?

Your robots.txt file contains useful but pretty much ignored statements like
Please don't crawl this site during our business hours!
(the crawler is not aware of your time zone and doesn't grab your office hours from your site), as well as actual crawler directives. In other words, everything you write in your robots.txt is a directive for crawlers (dumb Web robots that can fetch your contents but nothing more), not indexers (high sophisticated algorithms that rank only brain farts from Matt and me).

Hobo – I say index, you say crawl. You say tomato, I say....ah! I see!

Currently, there are only three statements you can use in robots.txt:

1. Disallow: /path
2. Allow: /path
3. Sitemap: <http://example.com/sitemap.xml>

Some search engines support other directives like “crawl-delay”, but that's utterly nonsense, hence safely ignore those.

The content of a robots.txt file consists of sections dedicated to particular crawlers. If you've nothing to hide, then your robots.txt file looks like:

```
User-agent: *  
Disallow:  
Allow: /  
Sitemap: http://example.com/sitemap.xml
```

If you're comfortable with Google but MSN scares you, then write:

```
User-agent: *  
Disallow:
```


User-agent: Googlebot
Disallow:

User-agent: msnbot
Disallow: /

Please note that you must terminate every crawler section with an empty line. You can gather the names of crawlers by visiting a search engine's [Webmaster section](#).

From the examples above you've learned that each search engine has its own section (at least if you want to hide anything from a particular SE), that each section starts with a

User-agent: [crawler name]

line, and that each section is terminated with a blank line. The user agent name "*" stands for the universal Web robot, that means that if your robots.txt lacks a section for a particular crawler, it will use the "*" directives, and that when you've a section for a particular crawler, it will ignore the "*" section. In other words, if you create a section for a crawler, you must duplicate all statements from the "all crawlers" ("User-agent: *") section before you edit the code.

Now to the directives. The most important crawler directive is
Disallow: /path

"Disallow" means that a crawler must not fetch contents from URIs that match "/path".
"/path" is either a relative URI or an URI pattern ("*" matches any string and "\$" marks the end of an URI). Not all search engines support wildcards, for example MSN lacks any wildcard support (they might grow up some day).

URIs are always relative to the Web space's root, so if you copy and paste URLs then remove the http://example.com part but not the leading slash.

Allow: path/
refines Disallow: statements, for example
User-agent: Googlebot
Disallow: /
Allow: /content/
allows crawling only within http://example.com/content/

Sitemap: http://example.com/sitemap.xml
points search engines that support the [sitemaps protocol](#) to the submission files.

Please note that all robots.txt directives are **crawler directives** that don't affect indexing. Search engines do index disallowed URLs pulling title and snippet from foreign sources, for example ODP (DMOZ – The Open Directory) listings or the Yahoo directory. Some search engines provide a method to [remove disallowed contents from their SERPs on request](#).

Hobo – Say I want to keep a file / folder out of Google. Exactly what would I need to do?

You'd check each HTTP request for Googlebot and serve it a 403 or 410 HTTP response code. Or put a "noindex,noarchive" Googlebot meta tag.

```
<meta name="Googlebot" content="noindex,noarchive" />
```

Robots.txt blocks with *Disallow*: don't prevent from indexing. Don't block crawling of pages that you want to have deindexed, as long as you don't want to use [Google's robots.txt based URL terminator](#) every six months.

Hobo – Sebastian, thanks so much for your invaluable insights into this pesky but powerful file. Your blog was recently [cited by Jim Boykin](#) as a favourite destination of Jim's. If I had to ask you to tell the readers 5 of your favourite posts on your own website, which ones would you pick?

Being a greedy link-whore of course I'd pick my [Canonical SEO definitions](#). I hope you don't mind that this link points to my [sitemap](#) (*sheesh you've spammed the rest of my blog anyways – Hobo 😊*) that some folks have even sphunn. Ok, that's zero, and here is the list of 5 posts that I consider somewhat useful, either because they're interesting from a technical point of view, or because they tell something about me.

1. [The anatomy of a server sided redirect: 301, 302 and 307 illuminated SEO wise](#)
2. [Shit happens, your redirects hit the fan!](#)
3. [Why proper error handling is important](#)
4. [Analyzing search engine rankings by human traffic](#)
5. [If you free-host your blog flee now!](#)
6. [Microsoft funding bankrupt Live Search experiment with porn spam](#)
7. [SEOs home alone – Google's nightmare](#)
8. [My plea to Google – Please sanitize your REP revamps](#)

I should have mentioned earlier that counting somewhat challenges me when it comes to limits of links lists. Of course I like a few more of my posts, but I can resist to quote my blog's site map.

Hobo – Where online do you hang out?

At [Sphinn](#) and [Google's Webmaster Help Group](#). For the latter some folks call me a slimy Google groupie, but I can perfectly live with that. Google's SEO forum is a nice place to help noobs and discuss interesting topics as well.

Hobo – Who do you read every day/week?

Oh well. That's a very long list. Probably the OPML file would be too large to email it. I read (sometimes skim) my friend's posts daily, when I'm swamped at least weekly. I guess the best way to get a grip of my reading preferences is [my shared feed](#), my [list of stumbles](#), [bookmarks](#), and [sphinns](#).

Hobo – Tell me who your favourite music band is? Mine is the [Stone Roses](#), have you heard of them?

Today that's Ten Years After, yesterday it was Bob Dylan. Stone Roses is not on my radar, maybe I missed out on a great band?

Hobo – What else are you interested in online?

Tough question. What can a lonely geek do online? Viewing porn of course. Seriously, I consume more technical stuff than smut.

Hobo – I'll send you a couple of links complete with free passwords I confiscated off my Managing Director, Michael 😊

Can't wait for this list. If it contains passwords from one of my adult sites I'll sue Michael! 😊

If someone wants to know more about robots.txt, where do they go?

Honestly, I don't know a better resource than my brain, [partly dumped here](#). I even developed a few new robots.txt directives and posted a [request for comments](#) a few days ago. I hope that Google, the one and only search engine that seriously invests in REP evolvments, will not ignore this post caused by the sneakily embedded "Google bashing". I plan to write a few more posts, not that technical and with real world examples.

Hobo – Can I ask you how you auto generate and mask robots.txt, or is that not for idiots? Is that even ethical?

Of course you can ask, and yes, it's for everybody and 100% ethical. It's a very simple task, in fact it's plain cloaking. The trick is to make the robots.txt file a server sided script. Then check all requests for verified crawlers and serve the right contents to each search engine. A smart robots.txt even maintains crawler IP lists and stores raw data for reports. I recently wrote a [manual on cloaked robots.txt files](#) on request of a loyal reader.

Hobo – Think Disney will come after you for your avatar now you are famous after being interviewed on the Hobo blog?

🦀 I'm sure they will try it, since your blog will become an authority on grumpy red crabs called Sebastian. I'm not too afraid though, because I use only a tiny thumbnailed version of an image created by a designer who –hopefully– didn't scrape it from Disney, as icon/avatar. If they become nasty, I'll just pay a license fee and change my avatar on all social media sites, but I doubt that's necessary. To avoid such hassles I've bought an individually drawn [red crab](#) from an [awesome cartoonist](#) last year. That's what you see on my blog, and I use it as avatar as well, at least with new profiles.

Hobo – What's your day job? Who do you work for?

I'm a freelancer loosely affiliated with a company that sells IT consulting services in several industries. I do Web developer training, software design / engineering (mostly the architectural tasks), and grab development / (technical) SEO projects myself to educate yours

truly. I'm a dad of three little monsters, working at home. If you want to hire me, [drop me a line](#). 😊

Sebastian, a big thanks for slapping me about Robots.txt and indeed for helping me craft the Idiot's Guide To Robots.txt. I certainly learned a lot from talking to you for a day, and I hope some others can learn from this snippet article. You're a gentleman spammer. 😊

[Sebastian](#) is somewhat of a celebrity around the search engine marketing sphere. Check out his blog when you can while it's free and before he does an [internet marketing ninja](#) / [seomoz samurai](#) and starts charging you for it. Hope you liked it – Shaun the Internet Marketing Hobo!

Like this article? I [recently assimilated veteran linkbuilder](#) Jim Boykin and **absolutely everything** he knew about linkbuilding before he launched the Internet Marketing Ninjas, which was lucky. You might find that of interest too 😊

Meta Keyword Tags

- Google seems to ignore Meta Keyword Tags
- Placing keywords in meta tags does not help your site in Google SERPS
- Some say meta keywords can be useful for other search engines, but I don't bother thinking or even **auto generating meta keywords**
- I don't use Meta Keywords (generally) and expand here: [Best Meta Keywords](#)

Related Articles

What's The Best Keyword Meta Tags Formula?

Ahh, a bastian of [crap and unethical seo companies](#) – the meta-keywords tag! How many crap seo companies mention cleaning and optimising this tag in their presentations? Companies that waste time on these waste client's money.

```
<meta name="Keywords" content="seo, search engine optimisation, optimization" /
```

I have one piece of advice with the meta keyword tag, which like the [title tag](#), goes in the head section of your web page, **forget about them**.

If you are relying on meta-keyword optimisation to rank for terms, your dead in the water. From what I see, Google ignores them or at least places no weight in them to rank websites. I hear rumours Yahoo and MSN might read them, but really, a seo has more important things to worry about than this nonsense.

What about other search engines that use them? Hang on while I submit my site to those 75,000 engines first lol 😊

Yes, 10 years ago search engines liked looking at your meta-keywords (those were the days!). I've seen OPs in forums ponder which is the best way to write these tags – with commas, with spaces, limiting to how many characters....

Forget about meta-keyword tags – they are a pointless waste of time and bandwidth. Could probably save a rain-forest with the bandwidth costs we save if everybody removed their keyword tags 😊

I'll be removing most of mine shortly to do my bit for the environment, and I certainly don't waste valuable client time putting them in new sites. Even (maybe especially) if I can auto-generate them.

Tin Foil Hat Time

So you have a new site..... you fill your home page meta tags with the 20 keywords you want to rank for – hey, that's what optimisation is all about, isn't it?

You've just told Google by the third line of text what to sandbox you *for* 😊 And wasn't meta name="Keywords" originally for words that weren't actually on the page that would help classify the document?

I had better take this tin foil hat off because now I am thinking if everybody removed them and stopped abusing Google would probably start looking at them but that's the way of things in search engines.

Ignore them. [Not even a 'second order' effect, in my opinion](#) – and that's all this is, remember.

[Check the number of characters](#) in your meta keywords tag.

Word Count

- There is no optimal word count, no optimal amount of words for Google SEO
- Consider: [Google SEO - How Many Words](#)
- Only be concerned with adding unique content with target keywords on the page
- Use as many or as little words it takes to communicate effectively
- There is a 1000 word limit on Google News syndication

Related Articles

How Many Words On A Page For SEO & Google?

I get asked this all the time – how much text do you put on a page to rank for a certain keyword? Well, as in so much of SEO theory and strategy, there is no optimal amount of text per page.

Instead of thinking about the quantity of the text think more about the quality of the content on the page. optimise this with searcher intent in mind. Well that's how I do it.

I don't subscribe that you need a minimum amount of words or text to rank in Google. I have seen pages with 50 words out rank pages with 100, 250, 500 or 1000 words. Then again I have seen pages with no text rank on nothing but inbound links or other 'strategy'.

At the moment, I prefer long pages and a lot of text, still focused on a few related keywords and keyphrases to a page. Useful for long tail keyphrases and easier to explore related terms.

Every site is different. Some pages can get away with 50 words because of a good link profile and the domain it is hosted on. For me the important thing is to make a page relevant to a user search. I don't care how many words I achieve this with and often I need to experiment on a site I am unfamiliar with. After a while, you get an idea how much text you need to use to get a page on a certain domain into Google.

For instance, this page might be relevant to a search for;

- How many words on the page for Google?
- How many words to rank in Google?
- How many words and characters on the page for SEO?
- How many words on the page for Yahoo?
- How many words on the page for MSN?
- What is the optimal amount of text on a page for search engines?

OK so I cheated a bit there, and normally I would take more time to work these questions into the text – but hopefully you get my drift.

There is no optimal number of words on a page for placement in Google. Every website is different from what I can see. Don't worry too much about word count if your content is original and informative.

- [Character Counter Tool](#)

Bold & Italic Keywords

- If [bold and italics are measurements in Google SEO](#), **I can't find it**
- Use bold / italics only when it's relevant
- if it is a factor in seo, it is minimal and behind a lot of other factors
- Rule of Thumb - if everything is bold, nothing is bold. Use it carefully. Emphasise when there is emphasis to be made.

Related Articles

Keywords In Bold Or Italic – Better For Google SEO?

As I mentioned in the [ALT Tag seo tip](#), some seo proclaim **putting your keywords in bold** or *putting your keywords in italics* is a benefit in terms of search engine optimizing a page – as if they are working their way through a check list.

It's impossible to test this, and I think these days, Google might be using this to identify what to derank a site for, not promote it in SERPS.

I use bold or italics these days specifically for users. Only if it's *natural* or **this is really what I want to emphasise!**

Don't tell Google what to sandbox you for that easily! I'm currently cleaning up the Hobo blog to reflect this, too.

I've been meaning, maybe forgetting, to point out in these posts I think Google treats every website differently to others in some respect. That is, more trusted sites might get treated differently than untrusted sites.

Canonical Issues

- "Canonicalisation is the process of picking the best URL when there are several choices..." [Matt Cutts](#)
- Every site can have canonical issues but not every site suffers
- When it is an issue, on larger, more dynamic sites, it can really cause trouble
- Effectively ranking benefit is spread over multiple urls, so weakening the canonical url, or the url you want to rank
- I redirect using 301s in the HTaccess file
- Consider [What Is A Canonical Tag?](#)

Related Articles

What Is A Canonical Tag?

Matt Cutts from Google shares tips on the new **Canonical Tag** that the 3 main search engines now support.

[Google](#), [Yahoo!](#), and [Microsoft](#) have all agreed to work together in a joint effort to help reduce duplicate content for larger, more complex sites, and the result is the new Canonical Tag.

Example Canonical Tag From Google [Webmaster Central blog](#):

```
<link rel="canonical"
href="http://www.example.com/product.php?item=swedish-fish" />
```

You can put this link tag in the head section of the duplicate content urls, if you think you need it.

ALT Tags (Attributes)

- Alt Tags (attributes!) are useful when used correctly
- [Use Alt Tags for humans first, Google second](#)
- Describe the image in an accessible manner
- I surmise Alt Tags would be heavily policed - spam them at your own risk
- Use empty ALTs for design elements, descriptive text for pictures
- Opinion - Optimised ALT tags are about as useful as a link to a page without the word on it that's in the anchor text. It's second order.

Related Articles

Don't Optimise Your ALT Tags For Google!

Ah the ALT tag. An essential part of that on-page quality score seo crow about lol 😊

- Keyword in the Title Tag – Check
- Keyword in the Page Content – Check
- Keyword in the meta description – Check
- Keyword in the ALT Tag?



Not quite!

If you were checking off some quality score card and ensuring your keywords where in every flippin' tag on your page **you've probably told Google what to derank you for** if you don't have the link-power to back it up (and sometimes, even if you do).

Use ALT tags (attributes) for descriptive text that helps visitors – and keep them unique where possible, like you do with your titles and meta descriptions. Sure, throw your keyword in there if you want once or twice.

Don't obsess. Don't optimise your ALT tags just for Google – do it for humans, for accessibility and usability.

And remember – even if, like me most days, you can't be bothered with ALT tags, at least put a blank one in so people with screen readers can enjoy your page.

Update 17/11/08 – Picked This Up At SERoundtable [about Alt Tags](#):

JohnMu from Google: **alt attribute** should be used to describe the image. So if you have an image of a [big blue pineapple chair](#) you should use the alt tag that best describes it, which is alt="big blue pineapple chair." **title attribute** should be used when the image is a hyperlink to a specific page. The title attribute should contain information about what will happen when you click on the image. For example, if the image will get larger, it should read something like, title="View a larger version of the big blue pineapple chair image."

Barry continues with a quote:

As the Googlebot does not see the images directly, we generally concentrate on the information provided in the “alt” attribute. Feel free to supplement the “alt” attribute with “title” and other attributes if they provide value to your users! So for example, if you have an image of a puppy (these seem popular at the moment 😊) playing with a ball, you could use something like “My puppy Betsy playing with a bowling ball” as the alt-attribute for the image. If you also have a link around the image, pointing a large version of the same photo, you could use “View this image in high-resolution” as the title attribute for the link.

SEF URLS

- You don't need to rewrite URLs
- [Google says not to rewrite URLs](#), if you don't know what you are doing
- From a user point of view it can be better
- From a search engine visitor point of view it can improve click thru
- when people link to your url, if it is rewritten, it will have important keywords in it that only improve rankings.
- I prefer to rewrite URLS when I have a good measure of control over things

Related Articles

Google Promotes Uncool URLs?

Google recently [gave more assistance](#) to webmasters, if you can call it that, concerning url rewriting, or changing dynamic variable filled URL to *more* search engine friendly, more human readable static looking URLS (OK, URI).

They actually could be interpreted as recommending **not to rewrite a website urls**, because there is a chance you could screw things up.

They *busted* some ‘myths’ too;

1. Myth: “Dynamic URLs cannot be crawled.” (knew that)
2. Myth: “Dynamic URLs are okay if you use fewer than three parameters.” (thought that)

I’ve mentioned before having [a keyword in a url](#) on its own has a minuscule, if any, effect on the ranking of a page but may have some benefits *when people use the url to link to the site* (I think it does).

I do see what Google is doing – they are telling people ‘Google can read dynamic urls’ – that’s what I will take from the post.... but only the most ignorant seo doesn’t know that already.

It’s not exactly in line with what the **W3C recommends**, from what I can determine.

In [Cool URIs Don’t Change](#), they determined a SEF url was more user friendly, now and in the long term, for humans. Some may say W3C advice is outdated, or trite, but I still try and follow it where I can. I still believe the best method for constructing urls is short and to the point – human readable preferably. If you go through a site CMS change, you can rewrite to keep old urls.

Of course, sometimes it’s hard to follow even the best advice, but it’s always worth remembering and trying in the end to achieve usability, accessibility and visibility.

I would still recommend rewriting urls, despite this post from the Google Webmaster Team. Then again, this advice is more usability orientated than a search engine optimisation benefit.

...and interestingly, the Google Webmaster Blog seems to produce SEF Urls LOL and it's worth pointing out – Google is not the only search engine (I did say that didn't I) 😊

XML Sitemaps

- [You do not need a XML sitemap](#)
- [XML sitemaps](#) alert Google to the list of urls on your website
- There is no guarantee Google will crawl or index these pages
- xml sitemaps are useful for large sites
- Not a substitute for a good navigation system and solid information categorisation
- XML sitemaps don't help you rank higher, they help getting more, to rank

Related Articles

Do I Need A XML Sitemap For My Website?

What is a xml sitemap and do I need one to 'seo' my site for Google?

(The XML Sitemap protocol) has wide adoption, including support from Google, Yahoo!, and Microsoft

No. You do not need a XML Sitemap to optimise a site for Google, again, if you have a sensible navigation system.

A XML Sitemap is a method by which you can help a search engine, including Google, find & index all the pages on your site. Sometimes useful for very large sites, perhaps if the content changes often, but still not necessary if you have a good navigation system.

1. Make sure all your pages link to at least one other in your site
2. Link to your important pages often, with varying [anchor text](#), in the navigation and **in page text content**

Remember Google needs links to find all the pages on your site.

[Sitemaps](#) are an easy way for webmasters to inform search engines about pages on their sites that are available for crawling. In its simplest form, a Sitemap is an XML file that lists URLs for a site along with additional metadata about each URL (when it was last updated, how often it usually changes, and how important it is, relative to other URLs in the site) so that search engines can more intelligently crawl the site.

I don't use xml sitemaps that much at all, as I am confident I can get all my pages indexed via links on the website and via RSS feed if I am blogging. **I would however suggest you use a 'website' sitemap** – a list of the important pages on your site.

Some CMS can auto-generate xml sitemaps, and [Google does ask you submit a site map in webmaster tools](#), but I still don't. If you want to find out more go to <http://www.sitemaps.org/>

I prefer to manually define my important pages by links, and 'old – style' getting my pages indexed via links from other websites. I also recognise not all websites are the same.

You can make a xml site online at <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com/> if you decide they are for you.

I'm certainly no authority on sitemaps – perhaps anyone else with any experience of them can add something...?

301 Redirects

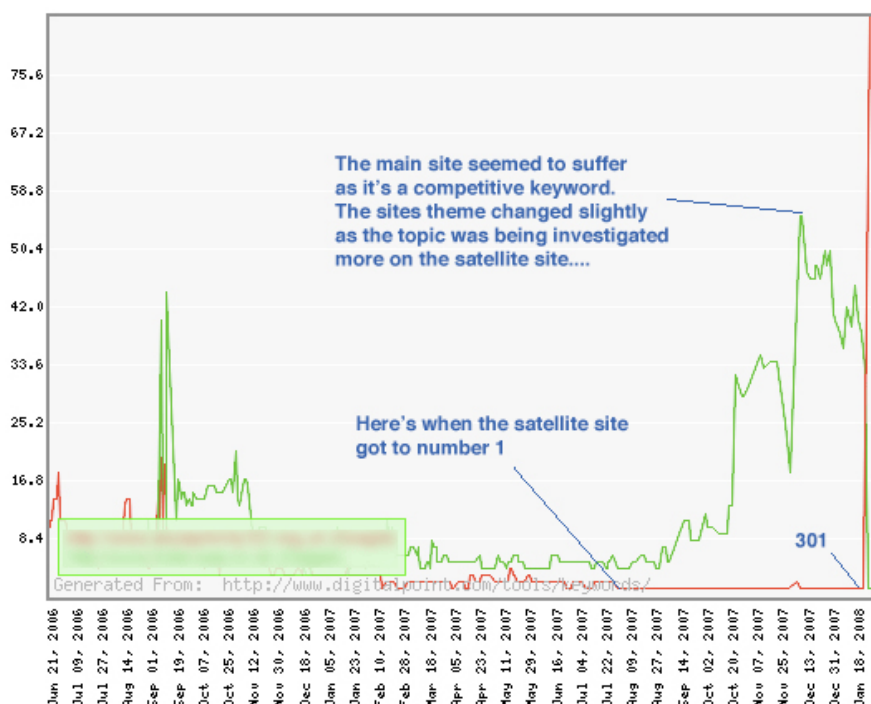
- Redirect 301 (HTACCESS)
- [301 redirects](#) transfer the pagerank and ranking of a page to another page
- You can transfer entire folders, or indeed whole domains - useful for re branding
- Google may be examining 301 redirects more closely and not always delivering expected results
- Keep pages as complete and relevant to the original as possible for best results

Related Articles

301 Ways Of Getting A No1 In Google > Moved Permanently!

It amazes me more people don't use the search engine friendly 301 Redirect (*Moved Permanently*) to capture top positions, especially when they control satellite sites for particular keywords, that rank well, or even are in the top ten serps.

I see satellite sites all the time ranking for good keywords, but the actual satellite sites themselves are often garbage and usually outdated – sometimes not exactly a compliment to the main brand site.

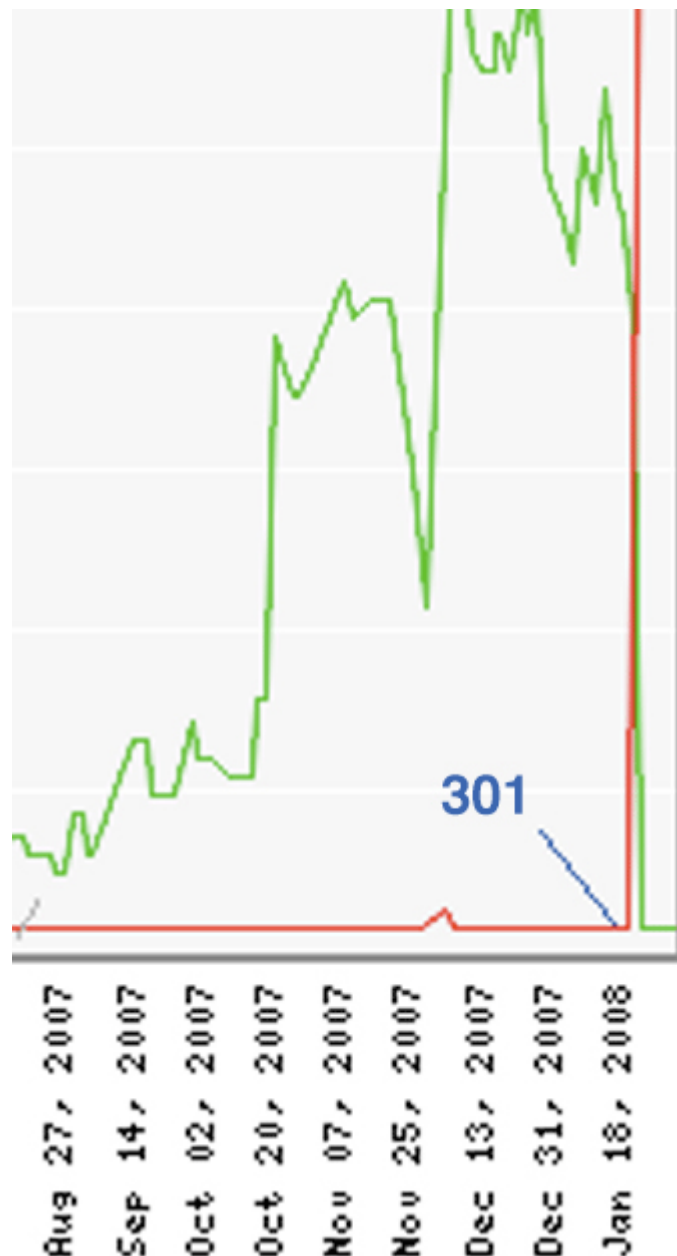


Recently I decided to 301 an unbranded satellite site (or mini site) into the main site of the company as I am fast falling out of love with the mini-site strategy. Creating 10 (interlinked) sites in a crowd out strategy for one serp is embarrassing to me nowadays but it is a technique I used years ago. I just prefer having the one main site to [seo](#) now and working to increase

that sites authority and trust – managing 10 sites usually means a lot of them won't get the time spent on them to actually convert the traffic to leads and sales.

Absorbing the satellite site would at least ensure these old pages previously on the satellite site where more likely to be kept up to date on the corporate site, and at the same time, the actual corporate website, well branded, now ranked for the competitive term.

You can see from the illustration above and below when I achieved the no1 position with the satellite site, the actual corporate site was actually taken in a slightly different direction.



I wanted to make the main company site (in Green) be the number one result, and basically I wanted the mini-site to vanish, but transfer all its [Google juice / Google 'heat'](#) and good rankings (as well as 600 visitors a day) to the corporate site.

The diagram shows it seems to have worked exactly as expected.

I completed this utilising the oft forgotten about (but perfectly white-hat) search engine friendly 301 Permanent Redirect in the .htaccess file on the old site (in red) to the corporate site (in Green).

```
redirect 301 /old.htm http://www.example.com/new.htm
```

I ensured the new page on the corporate site was basically very similar in theme to page that Google currently ranked at No1 in the SERPS, so Googlebot wouldn't think I was up to anything other than transfer rankings I had earned largely through organic links and [ninja linkbaiting & linkbuilding](#) on the old site.

The end result is very satisfying as:

1. The main site now ranks no1 in Google
2. The main site now has absorbed the authority and trust of the old page which should help its overall domain trust score in the search engines.
3. The page is now branded with the corporate id = better brand visibility
4. Inexperienced linkbuilders will be scratching their head for ages to come wondering what has happened and how the main site actually ranks at No1 in their attempt to reverse-engineer that particular serp.

It took about 2 days to actually see the old site disappear in Google and for the redirect to take effect.

A 'new' no1 position, and 600 more visitors to the main site each day.

W3c Accessibility

- Your page does not need to validate (HTML& CSS) to rank in Google
- Valid pages don't necessarily rank better than invalid pages
- Valid HTML and CSS is the sign of a well crafted site
- If valid HTML is a benefit, it's tiny where relevant to actually ranking better in Google
- Valid code is not a [seo magic bullet](#) - There are for more important pointers for Google

Getting New Content Indexed

- If your website is set up to 'ping' various services and search engines, you can inject new content virtually immediately into Google
- RSS is for me the single best way of injecting new content into Google instantly (nearly)
- Most blogging platforms and CMS are enabled with RSS
- Register the website feed at [Feedburner](#)
- Setup to Ping Google Blogsearch for a start
- Consider [The Fastest Way To Get Pages Indexed](#)

Related Articles

The Fastest Way To Get Pages Into Google?

It's amazing how fast Google indexes and ranks pages. I've seen pages get into Google and rank in the top ten for a phrase in less than 1 minute and I recently tested just [how fast Google publishes your content](#) if you're *well connected*.

If you have [Wordpress](#) installed (or any site with a RSS feed), you should have a [feedburner plugin](#) installed, then you can ping Google direct.

If you have done this nip over to [Google Feedburner](#), sign up (none of my clients need to do this of course) and register your site. Ensure you have hit the *Publiscise* button and choose *Ping Services*. Make sure Google and Pingomatic are selected.

What I also do is sign up to the feed in my feedreader (Google).

Next time you write an article, Google knows about it, and depending on the quality of the article, the age / health / trust / authority of your site, you'll be injecting content directly into Google – and fast.

This works for me. I wonder if it's the fastest way to actually get your blog content into Google?

Link Title attributes

- You don't need link titles and you certainly don't need them just to repeat anchor text already present
- A good link title can be useful if the anchor text of the link is your URL or 'more' for instance.
- I think they are as useful as a word in a link that is not on a page sort of thing
- I don't think Google would give these any weight for the target page unless they were forced to take this into account because of other poor signals

Ranking in Google

- To rank a page in Google for a specific query the word should be in;
 1. Title
 2. Keyword Rich Text
 3. Internal Links (diversity)
 4. Incoming Backlinks (diversity)
 5. Headings
- Think [keyword diversity](#)!
- Rankings constantly fluctuate in Google - It has been designed that way

Related Articles

Is It Diversity Of Keywords In Link Profile That's King?

No this isn't an article about backlinks beating content because we know the right backlinks keep nearly blank pages high in Google – for months at a time. It's just a theory so feel free to discuss with me in the comments. Bit of a ramble. I'm thinking about this and looking for exceptions, or evidence against, and to start an honest discussion. I'm fed up pumping info out, I'd prefer to start a discussion on this one.

It's about **ranking** in Google **or not ranking**. Based on observations.

Links effect rankings, more, they even **PERMIT rankings**. If you haven't got the keywords in links you won't feature and you certainly won't rank.

Content is king, especially for humans, but that content can't rank without links. I often wonder if Google needs the keyword you are wanting to rank for in the site's link profile. If it's not in this link profile for your site, you won't rank.

You get the keywords in your link profile by

- getting links from other websites (**primary**)
- internal navigation links (**secondary**)

I'm wondering if Google treats a *page title* as a **tertiary** link if the first two signals aren't clear enough and especially if the content is well cited (but with poor [anchor text](#))?)

The relationship between content and links is incestuous and can't be separated. I think seo zones. To rank it needs to be in your link profile and in your content, more specifically in:

1. Links
2. Title
3. Content

In that order. Google is making it harder to rank without having the keyword in these zones. Even though the title is 2nd in my list, you can quickly see how pivotal your page title is. I mean can you even rank what's more important out of the 3?

Adding a made up keyword to a page invites the supplementals to kick in with different rules – **letting content rank without links** (I think).

In normal serps you can have the word on the page but because it is not in the link profile it won't rank. Though in a page title, it may rank, throw in an internal link or backlink, it will rank. I'm talking keywords here not phrases.

Perhaps authority sites rank because of their link profile, not the content (although, of course, they wouldn't have that link profile without that content!) – But I am talking about the actual wheels that are play here.

I don't think I need LOTS more content on one page, I think I need LOTS more titles and words in my link profile – the content just backs this up (a strange thought if you think about it). So in effect for new pages you can get away with less content (more may increase long tail searches).

So it's not content I am adding, **I am adding important keywords (and diversity of these) to my link profile**. More links less content – and I'm still not linkbuilding yet. You can do a lot of this via internal links on a strong domain.

So for ranking, the most important is:

1. Diversity of keywords in your entire link profile
2. Diversity of keywords in your page title
3. Content (enough to make a page relevant to the keywords it can rank for)

If you think this way you can get pages that don't rank to rank, quite easily. and you don't need to buy 100 crappy links from domainers (although that can work too lol).

But yes you can get to the end of this article and say so links beat content, and yes, they can, but you've missed the point of what I am on about or my writing has confused – sorry.

Mmmm.... I don't think I needed this much content!

Note perhaps I am not thinking about this the right way. If someone can help, let me know and yes of course I know there are other things at play too.

SEO To Avoid

- choosing a title that has no relation to the content on the page
- using default or vague titles like "Untitled" or "New Page 1"
- using extremely lengthy titles that are unhelpful to users
- using a single title tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages
- stuffing unneeded keywords in your title tags
- writing a description meta tag that has no relation to the content on the page
- using generic descriptions like "This is a web page" or "Page about baseball cards"
- filling the description with only keywords
- using a single description meta tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages
- SEE [SEO To Avoid](#) on the Hobo SEO Blog for more
- Rule of Thumb - Keep It Simple Stupid. Everything you are about to try to game Google has been done before. Google knows what to look out for. Onsite - keep it simple.

Related Articles

[30 Techniques To Avoid – Best Practice SEO by Google](#)

Search Engine Optimisation – What Not To Do

So Google has now released a search engine optimisation [starter guide](#) for webmasters, which they use internally:

Although this guide won't tell you any secrets that'll automatically rank your site first for queries in Google (sorry!), following the best practices outlined below will make it easier for search engines to both crawl and index your content. [Google](#)

Still worth a read even if it is fairly basic, generally accepted (in the industry) [best practice search engine optimisation for your site](#).

Here's a list of **what Google tells you to avoid** in the document;

1. choosing a title that has no relation to the content on the page
2. using default or vague titles like "Untitled" or "New Page 1"
3. using a single title tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages
4. using extremely lengthy titles that are unhelpful to users
5. stuffing unneeded [keywords in your title tags](#)
6. writing a [description meta tag](#) that has no relation to the content on the page
7. using generic descriptions like "This is a webpage" or "Page about baseball cards"
8. filling the description with only keywords
9. copy and pasting the entire content of the document into the description meta tag

10. using a single description meta tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages
11. using lengthy URLs with unnecessary parameters and session IDs
12. choosing generic page names like "page1.html"
13. using excessive keywords like "baseball-cards-baseball-cards-baseball-cards.htm"
14. having deep nesting of subdirectories like ".../dir1/dir2/dir3/dir4/dir5/dir6/page.html"
15. using directory names that have no relation to the content in them
16. having pages from subdomains and the root directory (e.g. "domain.com/page.htm" and "sub.domain.com/page.htm") access the same content
17. [mixing www. and non-www. versions of URLs](#) in your internal linking structure
18. using odd capitalization of URLs (many users expect lower-case URLs and remember them better)
19. creating complex webs of [navigation links](#), e.g. linking every page on your site to every other page
20. going overboard with slicing and dicing your content (it takes twenty clicks to get to deep content)
21. having a navigation based entirely on drop-down menus, images, or animations (many, but not all, search engines can discover such links on a site, but if a user can reach all pages on a site via normal text links, this will improve the accessibility of your site)
22. letting your HTML sitemap page become out of date with broken links
23. creating an HTML sitemap that simply lists pages without organizing them, for example by subject (Edit Shaun – Safe to say especially for larger sites)
24. allowing your 404 pages to be indexed in search engines (make sure that your webserver is configured to give a 404 HTTP status code when non-existent pages are requested)
25. providing only a vague message like "Not found", "404", or no 404 page at all
26. using a design for your 404 pages that isn't consistent with the rest of your site
27. writing sloppy text with many spelling and grammatical mistakes
28. embedding text in images for textual content (users may want to copy and paste the text and search engines can't read it)
29. dumping large amounts of text on varying topics onto a page without paragraph, subheading, or layout separation
30. rehashing (or even copying) existing content that will bring little extra value to users

Pretty simple stuff but sometimes it's the simple seo often get overlooked. Of course, you put the above together with [Google Guidelines for webmasters](#).

Search engine optimization is often about making small modifications to parts of your website. When viewed individually, these changes might seem like incremental improvements, but when combined with other optimizations, they could have a noticeable impact on your site's user experience and performance in organic search results.

Benefits of Blogging

- Blogging can drive thousands of visitors to your site if you do it properly
- Blogging for SEO benefits is a long term commitment
- Blogs let you add focused content to your website easily
- Blogs allow visitors to easily interact with you via comments
- Blogs let other sites know you have new content on them
- A blog could be used to keep up with industry news, company news, and offer beginner guides and how to articles
- If it is a company blog, host it in a subdirectory of your main site rather than sub domain or alternate URL
- The more you put into a blog the more you will get out of it
- Successful bloggers live in their blogs
- Consider [ProBlogger](#), [CopyBlogger](#) or [Chris Garrett's blog](#) or book if you want to begin blogging
- Successful blogs cover an area that existing blogs don't do already; they stand out and can often be unique in content or attitude.

Linkbait

- [Linkbait](#) is a term coined about content that compels other sites to link to it
- Successful linkbait is a holy grail of organic SEO
- Consider: It's more useful to linkbait particular companies or websites, usually by writing about them (gosh!)
- Breaking news, Tools, Interviews, How To Articles or Beginners guides or top ten (20, 30....etc) lists usually make for decent linkbait
- Successful linkbait can be one or two blogs in your niche linking to you.
- If you are interested in Linkbait, consider [Lyndon's introduction to linkbait for beginners](#) on the Hobo blog or indeed his [linkbait coaching service](#).
- If you set out from the beginning to make your site a resource for your industry, you'll attract links from other sites naturally (especially if you tell them about it).
- In the end successful linkbait is about useful or interesting content and usually who you know in the networks.

Related Articles

Linkbait With Lyndon Antcliff (Lyndoman)

Quoted by [Times Magazine](#), quoted in The Sunday Times recently, a shameless linkwhore, a self publicist with a sharp wit with an online avatar the Communist Party would be happy with, Lyndon Antcliff (AKA [Lyndoman of Cornwall SEO](#)) is one of the best linkbaiters and SM players in the UK (although he'll probably consider that an insult).

He was an obvious choice when I wanted to pick somebody's brain about this thing called Linkbait.

Everybody in the search marketing industry knows the value of quality links to your website. Links to your site from other sites boosts traffic, brand awareness and rankings in search engines (especially Google) and while I'm far more comfortable with the idea of ~~blog spamming~~ [Ninja Linkbuilding](#) to appropriate links, I've been toying recently with *linkbait* – the art of creating content on your site that other sites will link to – naturally.

An Introduction To LinkBait with Lyndon;

Lyndon. Linkbait. What Is It?

It's the creation of compelling and seductive content that persuades you perform an action such as [linking to it](#).

When did you discover linkbait?

I think it was one of those things that crept up on me, I am sure I heard it from [Nick Wilson](#) first back in 2005, but the concept has obviously been around for years. It just didn't have a name.

What are the benefits of a good piece of linkbait?

Er, links? Seriously, it's that simple. Although at times I have been told by a client that links are irrelevant and it's all about branding, buzz and eyeballs.

What is the process?

My process is headline and idea first, and then structure the content around that whilst keeping in mind the intended audience.

List your 5 favourite traffic driving networks

1. [Digg](#)
2. [StumbleUpon](#)
3. [Propeller](#)

The rest really don't matter. And don't even get me started on the uselessness of [Mixx](#). There others that give a dofollow, but when you are talking traffic, if it's not a potential 4 figures it's not worth the energy to submit. .

How do you kick off a bit of linkbait – i.e. – how do you approach the start of a campaign. The articles done. It's ready, what next? Is it off to my [preferred Social Network](#) or is it an IM to ask friends to submit? Ever submit your own stories to Digg?

I have never actually asked anyone to submit stuff to [Digg](#), but I may change that.

I submit my own stories all the time, I prefer to have that control, on occasions someone has submitted the story and I have to throw my weight at that submission. It may be something to do with letting my clients know it's me who has done the submission. But I am talking digg here, on other sites the process may be a little difference.

Here's the thing. Social media marketing is more complicated than you think, in certain ways it's simple, but you have to adapt tactics to suit the situation and that's where instinct is important.

Tell me five things you think about before you post a piece of linkbait? What's the process and what's most important?

1. **Headline:** I would say the headline is the most important as if you don't have this you have nothing. But a good headline can still get people to look at bad content.
2. **Formatting:** This is actually quite important, by formatting I mean the way the thing looks. There are specific looks which certain people associate with something they would like to link to, the aim is to emulate the "look", which is different to different target groups.
3. **Images:** The web is multimedia, so use it. A great picture can do the work for you, a video even more so. If you can get an image in your linkbait do it, but

not everyone has a good eye, check it with friends you know will tell you it's crap if it is before you press submit.

4. **Audience:** Absolutely crucial, you have to know who the piece is intended for. You have to craft your idea to be able to fit snugly into the minds of your intended audience.
5. **Spelling:** I work very fast, so I make a lot of spelling mistakes, and I don't usually bother with grammar. But diggers, for example are nazis for grammar and spelling, so if you want anything dugg, it's best to triple check.

Is Stumbleupon for eyeballs and Digg for links?

I would say on a whole, yes. But the converse is also true. The thing is, the subject is so broad that anything can happen, it's best not to be restrictive in your strategy, best to keep it fluid. It's a moving target and you have to constantly readjust.

What's key to getting on Digg's front page?

Getting enough votes. Would be the glib answer, although that's not entirely true these days, it's getting the **right kind of votes**. You **need votes from people who have never voted for your stuff before** and you need for people not to bury you. For this to happen you cannot emit one whiff you are trying to game the system. You must blend with the natives, learn their lingo, know what they are into. As dirty as it sounds, you have to step into the mindset of your regular digg user, I'm not talking about power users here, I mean the guy who just likes to use digg as a place to find cool stuff.

I could write thousands of words on this subject, but when it comes down to it, **you simply have to learn what those non-power diggers want and give it to them.**

How do you avoid pissing the networks and users off?

Never get sucked into the comments on digg, it's just not the place for logical, sane, discourse. Don't write about how to game Digg and Propellor, both sites have banned my blog, I assume it's because I help people to the front pages, but maybe it's just because I use the wrong deodorant.

Like most people I did the multiple account mambo until they all got banned, now I mostly have one account and never cross vote.

Also, you have to remember that people actually use these social bookmarking and networking sites for recreation, not as a way to help market clients. I see it like product placement in movies, as long as it's in the background and not in your face the natives don't mind. But as soon as they are brought to attention what you are doing, time to run for the hills.

How often do you spend crafting a piece of linkbait?

For clients, I do one a week, no more than that.

Any ethics in linkbait these days? What will you not do?

I won't linkbait certain topics like porn, booze, and anything illegal. I don't use the attack hook much, I save my ranting for my IM network.

How important is community collaboration in the social media sites when you are a linkbaiter?

I think you have to keep your powder dry. Linkbaiting is creative, and like creative exploit you are only as good as your last piece and it's the community that can hold up the mirror to see how you are doing. I'm very cynical, and when someone tells me I am great I think, "what's this guy want", but when they say I'm crap I'm like, "interesting, tell me more". Maybe it's a British thing, but I definitely think you shouldn't go believing your own hype and that's why it's important to be involved in the community.

Who do you think are the best linkbaiters in the world?

[Jason Calacanis](#), Steve Jobs, Bill Gates etc. I know they are not known primarily as linkbaiters, but it's people like that we can learn from. The process itself can get you so far, but you need a bit of fairy dust too. Calacanis especially, and it's not just that he has a big gob, it's that he says things which connect to people in a way others do not.

I was nearly first to Sphinn your [Page Rank post](#) but got distracted(!). In your opinion what's the best piece of linkbait on your site?

The most successful one was I think my third or fourth post, about can Digg survive all the new Digg clones coming out. After Calacanis linked to me everyone else flocked in, kinda put me on the map. But the other great post was simply a list of all the great posts about linkbait. I don't think it would work now as the industry is a year older and there are so many social media/linkbait blogs out there that such a list is less worthwhile.

What's the best piece of linkbait you've seen recently and why is it your favourite?

The last good thing was at. The reason I like it is because it takes time to establish the arguments and it's not simply content to throw up on Sphinn. You know the article has taken time, you can disagree with it and still link to it. But to me, great linkbait is what stops me in my tracks and read, and on the web, that is an amazing feat. I didn't link to it as I hardly link to anything these days, but I stumbled and Sphunn.

Actually whilst we are here, you lot out there. Yes I'm talking to you [seo](#) bloggers, stop thinking the best length to have a post is 300-500 words just because Darren Rowse once said. A blog post should be as long as needed for the idea or argument to be communicated and established.

I hear you like poetry (and here, I thought that was for girls) Got a favourite poet?

- [Philip Larkin](#)

- [Dorothy Parker](#)
- [Spike Milligan](#)

Actually, Lyndon, is poetry for girls? 😊

Well what is poetry? When I was at school poetry was about dead white men and flowers and clouds and stuff. But what poetry really is, is the ability to create imagery using the fewest words possible. To burn the words into the brain of the recipient so that they absolutely remember what you said.



To finesse the language into such a powerful, wonderful experience that women swoon and men go off to battle. Nothing girly about that, not that girls are bad, I think girls are a good thing. I hardly think you could describe someone like [Rabbie Burns](#) as a girly girl 😊

You've got a good point there about [Burns 'an'a'that](#) and I love Spike, so I will cut the girly jokes and confess I like my poetry a bit more [epic](#) and [melancolic](#) although I am far from an avid reader.

I love my music though and I'm a [Stone Roses](#) man and I think even introduced the previously very uncool [Sebastian](#) to them recently 😊 Who's your favourite Band?

The last band I was nuts about was [Idlewild](#), on my mp3 player now is the Gossip, Kasabian, Killers, Kaiser Chiefs, Johnny Cash etc.

Actually you and I have a similar taste in music. I've seen all of those bands live (Idlewild the most recent – they were terrific at the Connect Festival. I'm looking forward to [The Enemy](#) next month actually)

Who's your favourite Linkbaiter?

[Me](#)

Why am I not surprised? 😊 What was the last thing that pissed you off?

My server being down and my website down so I don't get to brag about being quoted in the Sunday Times last weekend. I have to do it here. 😊

Thanks for taking the time out to answer a few questions for me. You'll see I've refrained where possible from linking to Wikipedia and given the link love to deserving sites, a policy I sort of adopted after [reading your views on Wiki](#). Hope you approve. 😊

PS – If you enjoyed you might be interested in these other recent interviews on the Hobo Blog

1. [Jim Boykin](#), Linkbuilding Tips

2. [Sebastian of Sebastian's Pamphlets](#) Robots 101
3. [Tim Nash](#). Stumbleupon

Social Media

- Social media sites are sites where people hang out online, interact, and more importantly for us share information of interest.
- There are many social media *experts* out there - anyone can make friends online - not everybody can make the right friends and leverage that for the benefit of business in a viral manner.
- Consider this [Introduction to Social Media](#) by [Shana Albert](#).
- Social Media is content driven - make a lot of contacts and help them leverage your content (and theirs) - in many ways it is a two way street - unless of course your content is stellar or timely!
- Social media is a good way to compliment your seo efforts, but it's not necessarily the actual links from these sites that you're looking for – it's links from real sites that count most.

Related Articles

[How To Get Started In Social Media | Shana Albert](#)

4 Steps to a Successful Start in Social Media

The difference between the web of a few years ago and the web today is Social Media.

Social Media is basically communication online. That doesn't sound too complicated, huh? But for many beginners it can be. There are many different forms of Social Media... many different ways of communicating online.

Getting involved in Social Media can be intimidating. So much so that [you might not know where to even begin](#). There is *Facebook*, *MySpace*, *Twitter*, *Plurk*, *Mixx*, *Digg*. There are blogs, forums, wikis, photo sharing, vlogging (video blogging), and others. They are all different, so which do you devote your time to?

In this post I'm going to get back to the very beginning....I'm going to explain the very basics of how to get Started with Social Media.

1) Figure out what you want to get out of Social Media

Ask yourself the question, "What do I want to get out of Social Media?". The answer to this question should direct you to the type of Social Media activities you should participate in.... What activities you will benefit the most from. If you are looking to network online with people who share your passion for swimming then joining Digg is probably not the most productive way to go about that.

Below I made a quick chart of common Social Media activities and what needs they meet. Please keep in mind that this chart just gives you a small piece of a much bigger picture. There are many more social media activities and tons more Social Networking sites;

SOCIAL MEDIA	PERSONAL USE	BUSINESS USE
Blogging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Journal or a Diary • Write as a hobby about anything • Allows you to have conversations with others regarding your Blogging Topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a blog to an established website to add updated content often • create a Blog as a Business in itself (i.e. eCommerce, Google Adsense, Affiliate Programs) • Allows you to communicate with your customers/clients. • Establish yourself as an expert in your field.
Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask Questions & get Answers • Meet others with the same interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering questions can help establish you as a known expert in your field. • Answers to your unknown business related questions • Branding
MicroBlogging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun Chit Chat • Keep in Contact with Friends & Family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Buzz • Occasional Links to Posts and Product Pages • Business/Industry Networking • Branding
Video Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Family & Friends in the “know” as to what is going on in your life. • Find humorous videos • Find “how to” videos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great way to let other people know about your business & what you have to offer. Show off your products or services. • Help with Universal Search
Photo Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another wonderful way to share memories with family and friends.... anytime online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put images of your products and services online. Another way for viewers/clients/customers to find you • Helps with Universal Search
Social Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends – MySpace, Facebook, Friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs, Professional – LinkedIn, The Square, Yahoo Kickstart

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abroad • Relationships – Crazy Blind Date, • Animals – DoggySpace, Animal Internet, Petster • Virtual Communities – Playdo, Habbo , Whyville • Family / Parenting – Got Kids Network, BabyChums, Parenting • Hobbies – Sports, Music, Reading, Car Enthusiasts • Social News – Digg, Mixx, Reddit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry – Radiologist, Fashion , Art, Marketing • Tips, Answers, Suggestions – SpongeFish, Yahoo! Answers • Traffic – Digg, Mixx, Reddit • Fancy Dress – Costumes
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Again, **the above chart** is simply a tiny piece of social media activities and what you can do there. There is so much more, as a matter of fact, many of the above Social Media activities and Social Networking sites can be used for either business or personal. It is all in how you use it..... in who you network with.

2) Create your Profiles

Once you have determined what Social Sites you want to be a member of it is time to create your Profile.

This task should not be taken lightly. It is extremely important to get the profile perfect because this is the first impression other members of the community will get of you. And, we all know the saying, “You don’t get a second chance to make a first impression”.

I know very cliché, but also very true. Your profile is how community members will begin to get to know you. What you have in your profile will tell other community members a bit about you.... will help members determine if that want to check you out further.

What is it you want other members of the community to know about you?

- [Avatar](#) – Do NOT use the default avatar. These get ignored. Not only do the default avatars get ignored, but community members feel these members aren’t very serious about the community.
- [Profile Name](#) – This is the name you want the community to know you by. Make this name memorable. If you are networking for business purposes think of using your Company Name.... great for branding purposes.
- [Profile Details](#) – Take a few extra minutes to come up with a great description of yourself and/or your business. It shouldn’t be too long... just long enough to tell the

important things about you and/or your business. If it is too long members might not take too much time to read the entire thing. So, keep it short, but detailed.

- Website Links – If you have websites that you would like to let others know about and you are able to add links to your profiles....then do it. Active members of Social Networking Communities will most likely be checking your profile out. If you have links in your profile you have a pretty good chance of members clicking on them to check out your sites.

3) Learn the Community

Learn the Ins & Outs of being an active and genuine member of that particular community.

I know.... boring & unnecessary, *right?! Wrong!!*

- One of the things that can get you started on the wrong foot with any community is doing something that is against the Terms of Service (TOS). For example, my favorite Social Site is StumbleUpon. But, you can get kicked off of StumbleUpon for many things. One of which is constantly stumbling your own website or stumble exchanges. So, that would be a huge mistake that many would make if they joined StumbleUpon and started participating without reading StumbleUpon's TOS.
- Also, check to see if the community has a FAQ page for Newbies. This would be a lot easier to understand than reading the Official TOS page. Plus, the Newbie page probably lists plenty of tips and community suggestions that can make your transition from Newbie to Community Pro much easier.
- Another idea is to keep an eye on the popular, most active members. What are they doing, what are they voting on, what are they submitting & what are they commenting on? Keeping an eye on these facts can help you determine what might work and what might not work.
- I know these things might be time consuming, but in the long run it can make the difference of "making it" or getting lost within the community.... instead of blending in do what you can to stand out. Taking the time to study and learn from the community can give you the information you need to learn what it will take to [stand out from the rest](#).

4) Become an Active Part of that Community. Enjoy it.

This is the fun part. This is where you put all that you learned above into good use. Social Media can be a lot of fun and very rewarding & powerful in so many ways. But, the thing is you will need to use this power for good and not evil. I have created the following image to show you what I envision this aura around your Online Community Profile to be:



Bottom line to be a success in an Online Social Community, just like in any Community, **be real, be genuine** and “do unto others as you would want done unto you” and you will be success. Treat others with respect and you can’t screw up too badly.

To participate in Social Media can be work and [take up a lot of your time](#). But, as with any community as long as you are participating in a community in an honest and genuine way you will get back as much as you give and probably come away with so much more.

A Bit About Shana Albert by Hobo

Shana is a [Social Media Specialist](#) and one of my favourite bloggers – you can learn a lot from Shana, believe me. It was a real pleasure to have her guest post on the [Hobo Blog](#) to help visitors learn how to use these networks properly.



She writes on all things Social Media and Web 2.0 on her blog – Social Desire. [Subscribe](#) to hear more of her ramblings or check out her [Stumbleupon favourites](#).

Get more of Shana at <http://www.socialdesire.com/>

PS – And why not vote for her at the [Hottest Bloggers Calendar](#) so she can get a nice prize 😊

Shana now has the keys to the Hobo blog, so hopefully we’ll get more great posts from her in the future 😊

Google Local Business

- [Google local](#) business (part of Google Maps) is the first place you should register your small business
- It can provide nearly instant first page, even number 1 rankings, even for new sites
- You can choose 5 keywords to rank for
- You can have multiple listings if you have multiple addresses and websites
- You can also add opening times, coupons and images to your profile (which you should)
- Beware some companies may have already registered your business to drive traffic to their site - So Claim Yours ASAP.

Reciprocal Links

- Reciprocal links may be devalued although I think it largely depends on the quality of the links and the pages/sites/ they are on.
- Reciprocal links are natural to have in moderation - risky to have in entirety
- **Never worry about reciprocating links from relevant websites in your niche** when the other website is more trusted (older, more PR, lots of links) than yours
- I do not use Recip Linking as a RANKING strategy
- One way backlinks are best

Google Base / Products

- Google Product Search "helps Google shoppers find and buy products across the web".
- You can submit your product feed to Google Product Search, allowing Google shoppers to quickly and easily find your site.
- It's not just for e commerce sites and shops - you can add services
- Google Product Search / Base is a [Google One Box](#) feature and another chance to rank in Google as well as in the organic and paid listings.
- You can add your products [here](#) - you don't even need a website.
- The bonus of Google product search is that sometimes specific products appear in Google SERPS - sometimes at Number 1, 2 & 3 spots.

Double Listings

- Sometimes Google returns two pages from the one site in SERPS - a double listing.
- Generally speaking, this means you have at least two pages with enough link equity to reach the top ten results - two pages **very relevant** to the search term
- Getting double (or indented) placement in Google can be dependent on the relevance of your pages, the strength of your domain and the competition for the actual term
- Go for double listings for long tail phrases which already bring traffic to your site from one article
- It's easy to achieve, and improves traffic
- See [How To Get Double Or Indented Listings In Google](#) SERPS.
- See also this article by [Aaron Wall](#)

Related Articles

How To Get Double or Indented Listings in Google

Someone asked me what Google Double or Indented Listings were today, and how to get them. Simply put, it's when you have two listings from the same website in the top ten results in Google instead of one (in [normal view with 10 results](#)).

Generally speaking, this means you have at least two pages with enough link equity to reach the top ten results – two pages very relevant to the search term. You can achieve this with relevant pages, good internal structure and of course links from other websites. It's far easier to achieve in less competitive verticals but in the end it does come down in many cases to domain authority.

To get a double or indented listing;

1. A bit of Domain Authority
2. Targeted, relevant articles
3. Internal Linking (esp. between articles)
4. The odd link from external sites (if any)

i.e. nothing spectacular. It's quite simple stuff.



A Google Indented or Double Listing

Say a page is in **position 1** and another page from the same site has **position 8** (in a regular top ten view in Google preferences). **Google will join these listings together in position 1 and two**, giving you the lion's share of the clicks.

This represents 20% of the Google organic listings instead of the usual 10% – and an increase in clicks to your properties. You would be crazy not to optimise a second page if you had a page in the top ten – especially in less competitive niches.

If you want double listings (or indented listings), add relevant content on your site that meets the expectations of a searcher looking for that particular phrase and you'll probably acquire them naturally if you have some relevant links too. If you want a more surgical approach, you'll need at least two pages optimised for the same term and interlinked closely.

It might not be obviously apparent which page on your site is ranking *2nd* if it is in the 2nd or 3rd page of results but find it and then optimise it, linkbuild to it (start with internal links) and when it hits the top ten, you'll get a double listing.

[Andy Beard](#) & [Aaron Wall](#) comments on double listings too if you want to learn more.

Accessibility

- Google needs to be able to find all the pages on your site
- Traditionally Google found your pages by crawling links, visiting them and collating the information.
- A good accessible site structure is still incredibly important, even though we now have RSS and XML syndication
- Keep navigation simple
- The most important thing to remember is Google needs to find your pages - so make it easy using plain text links
- Keep in mind if your site is **100% Flash**, you will probably find it harder or more expensive to rank your content than you would with a HTML & CSS website.
- Although a bit out of date, our accessibility tips page is still worth a read – <http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/tips/>

Duplicate Content (On-site)

- Google can run into duplicate content issues with your site if it finds info in more than one place.
- **Ideally you want targeted information found on single sources you can optimise fully** with page titles etc and optimise to convert visitors
- Google sometimes can display content on other pages less optimised for SERPS and visitors
- Rankings and visitor conversion can be severely hampered if Google chooses pages less optimised to rank
- Minimise dupe content issues by ensuring Google can find the information only or 'on the whole' on optimised pages
- Minimise boilerplate repetition: Don't repeat large portions of the same text on every page.
- <http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/duplicate-content-penalty/>

Website hacking & Cracking

- Hacked sites are becoming increasingly common.
- Not all black hat seo are comfortable actually hacking sites, but some are
- Lost rankings are a common side affect
- Hackers or Crackers compromise your website, some deface your site, some leave hidden links behind that link to bad neighbourhoods
- As a result of often black hat seo techniques, like hidden text and keyword stuffing, Google can and will remove your site from its SERPS, or demote them down pages.
- Tip - Block Google from indexing plugin or open directories, check your site often. Know who you link to. Ensure your website is on a well maintained server. Keep plugins updated. Back up.
- If your website hacked, it can be re-included in Google by signing up to Webmaster tools - www.google.com/webmasters/tools

Google Sitelinks

- Sitelinks are awarded to sites Google trusts for a particular term
- It can take months to acquire sitelinks
- You need incoming links, citations which time and time again tell Google the same information about the site
- Most brands will have sitelinks
- Any site can get sitelinks
- Sitelinks win more space in the Google SERPS, and therefore improve click through rate to pages Google deems important on your site
- Tell Google which pages are important by linking to them often
- Sitelinks come in different varieties.

White Hat SEO

- White Hat SEO is keeping your website squeaky clean - it generally means following Google guidelines.
- White Hat SEO focuses on content and getting as many natural editorial links as possible
- White Hat SEO in my opinion is focused squarely on what you do ONSITE and ONPAGE.
- Just about all other forms of SEO including Ninja Linkbuilding are Grey Hat SEO, because Google guidelines change pretty frequently - what's grey today is black tomorrow.
- As I learn more and more, I don't think there are any 'hats'. It's about doing what's right in the environment you compete in.

Black Hat SEO

- Blackhat SEO is techniques that if discovered will get a site or page de indexed - they are clearly violating Google TOS
- Google calls this 'unethical seo'
- Black Hat SEO isn't a quick fix - black hat seo is also time consuming and something big brands and regular companies should not consider if they depend on traffic from Google
- Black hat seo is more advanced than the basic keyword stuffing and hidden text you hear about and can include Parasitic hosting and cloaking.
- Don't be seduced by black hat scams - they exist too.
- Big brands 'seem' to get away with more, so because a tactic works for them, it might not for you

Beginners SEO Guide

- This is a beginners introduction to SEO - a lot of it is my opinion - I still try and learn everyday
- The best way to really understand Google is to build a crap site and make it better
- There's no short cuts, and no single [seo magic silver bullet to success](#)
- Nobody one person knows how Google works exactly
- Google was reported to have changed it's algorithm more than once a day last year
- Build a site for users, not just for search engines (you have heard of that before!?)

Related Articles

What Is The SEO Magic Bullet? – SEO How-To-Tuesday 3

What is the **SEO Magic Bullet**? What is the big secret in SEO? How can you deliver it to achieve top number 1 rankings in Google, Yahoo and MSN?

Many people ask me this one and there's a simple answer.

There is none. No magic bullet in seo, at least. There will always be those who would believe in such a thing, but it's a **theory**, and that is it. **There is no such thing as a magic bullet in seo, so don't believe [a seo company](#) who tells you different.** Good positions in the search engines take hard work whether it be creating a website Google likes or promoting a finished site nobody knows about to search engines and social media networks in a proper manner.

Sure, there's tricks and tactics that are deployed by some better than others, but there are no big secrets (no "white hat" anyway) in SEO. There is clever seo, though, and creative seo. SEO that gets results with the minimum of effort.

If anybody had the magic bullet, they'd have used it by now, and Google would have been on them faster than a hobo on a hot sandwich (I can say that can't I).

The biggest advantage any one seo has over another is experience. A culmination of knowledge. The knowledge of what doesn't work and what will actually hurt your site is often more valuable than knowing what will give you a short lived boost.

Getting to the top of the serps is be a simple formula – it has to be. One that is constantly in change. But it's more a collection of skills, methods and techniques, a way of doing things, than a one-size-fits all magic trick. After 8 years, I'm still trying to get it down to its simplest denominator.

I think it's about doing simple stuff right. From my experience, this is borne out time and time again. Good text, simple navigation structure, quality links. To be relevant takes time, effort and luck, just like anything else worthwhile.

No magic bullet theory – no big secrets – not in SEO at least. OCD helps, though, does that count, I wonder?

Beginners Guides

- [Quick SEO Tutorial](#)
- [Website Design Tips](#)
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- [Social Media Help](#)
- [Robots.txt Tutorial](#)

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- [Geek Ranking Factors](#)
- [Link Building Tactics](#)
- [Link Development](#)
- [SEO Success Pyramid](#)
- [SEO Domination](#)
- [Local Search Ranking Factors](#)

SEO Blogs

I've learned a lot from reading SEO blogs and other sites. I'm going to list places you can dig for a more comprehensive seo education.

- [Hobo](#)
- [Sebastian's Pamphlets](#)
- [Bill Slawski](#)
- [Aaron Wall](#)
- [Rand Fishkin](#)
- [Edward Lewis](#)
- [Andy Beard](#)
- [Half's SEO Notebook](#)
- [Michael VanDeMar](#)
- [David Naylor](#)
- [Search Engine Journal](#)
- [Blumenthals](#)
- [Daily SEO Tips](#)
- [Tim Nash](#)
- [Jim Boykin](#)
- [Matt Cutts](#)
- [Weip Knoll](#)
- [David Harry](#)
- [SERoundtable](#)
- [Search Engine People](#)
- [Tad Chef](#)
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- [SEO Black Hat](#)
- [Slightly Shady SEO](#)
- [Joost de Valk](#)
- [Donna Fontenot](#)
- [Rae Hoffman](#)
- [Eric Ward](#)
- [Matt McGee](#)
- [Michael Gray](#)

SEO Tools

- [Google Webmaster Tools](#)
- [Backlink Analyzer](#)
- [Backlink Watch](#)
- [Link Diagnosis](#)
- [Xenu Link Sleuth](#)
- [Hittail](#)
- [PageRankBot](#)

More DIY SEO Resources

[Wikipedia](#)

[What Is SEO](#)

[SEO Fast Start](#)

[SEOMoz Beginner Guide](#)

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