



# **THE LINKBUILDERS BIBLE**

2010 Edition

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## ***DISCLAIMER***

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# ***Introduction.***

Linkbuilding and SEO as a whole must be one of the topics online that perpetuates more false information and perpetuated myths than almost any other technical subject. There is a very simple reason for this. Apart from the teams who create the search engine algorithms, nobody else in the entire world knows exactly what works and what does not.

So although it is a technical subject, nearly every single bit of information you will read is pure conjecture. That is why it can be such a massive and confusing subject for people to get to grips with.

One day, soon after I started out in creating websites, I wrote down in my notes “linkbuilders bible”. It was purely a thought to one day find a “real world” guide to linkbuilding that covered every major aspect of the subject using the best information, and encompassing the good, bad ugly practises in an objective manner.

I could not find one that told me everything I wanted to know. So I sat down to write an authoritative, “whole of subject” guide, that would save people hours of reading and forum surfing and helping them to make better informed decisions.

The Linkbuilders Bible has not been written to go through every single procedure in detail. It has been designed to be an “entry point” into each subject, to give you some clarity about what you can do, and then allow you to research and build you own knowledge, skills and processes. If you are looking for a set-by-step idiots guide, I hate to break it to you, but it simply does not exist because the subject is so broad, ever-changing and subjective.

One subject I want to just touch on is ethics. Everyone has their own personal beliefs about what is right and wrong. Linkbuilding especially mirrors the real world, in that decisions you take can impact on others.

As an example, blog commenting is a hugely contentious subject. You will routinely read on forums and in SEO guides about placing comments on relevant blogs to get a link to your site. What you are actually doing, no matter how nice you make the comment, is spamming your link onto someone else's blog post. No matter how you personally reconcile it, you are piggy-backing someone else's creativity.

I am not going to cover mass automation tools in detail, mainly because it is a huge and controversial subject well beyond “linkbuilding” that the majority of people would try. If you are hell-bent on turning to the dark side then there are forums that you can learn on simply by searching for “blackhat forum”.

Throughout The Linkbuilders Bible we will be referring to a variety of terms that you may be unfamiliar with. Rather than doubling the size of this guide by adding detailed explanations of each term, I will simply refer you to this page whenever you need an explanation:

<http://www.seobook.com/glossary/>

Finally, linkbuilding as a concept is one of the simplest in the world. Build great content, shout about it and hope people will naturally link to it. The reality is somewhat different, but if we all keep in our minds how it *can and should be*, the internet will be a much nicer place to create things.....

# ***What is a Link & Why Are They Important?***

A link is how one webpage connecting to another. It is important to define the two reasons for links existing. The first reason is the “idealistic” reason, the second is the “reality”, and the reason why there is a never-ending frenzy to obtain links:

1. To provide people with quick access to relevant or interesting content.
2. To boost your Search Engine Results Page (SERP) ranking.

The Linkbuilders Bible has been been written to help you with the second reason for linking, to boost your SERP positions.

## ***What types of links can I build?***

There are three main types of link that you can create:

1. Reciprocal links. Also called two-way links, these are obtained through exchanging links with another site, the classic “link exchange”. These links are now very low value, and are seen by Google as an obvious attempt to “game” the rankings. Why? Simply because if two sites are linking to each other then the chances are they have agree to do so, which goes against Google's preference for “natural” links. For this reason I say avoid them unless you can arrange a highly-relevant link that will send you a decent amount of traffic. Also, ask yourself, why are you wasting your valuable time using a reciprocal link exchange such as linkmarket.net or linksmanager.com, when there are a ton of ways outlines in The Linkbuilders Bible to get one way links?

2. One way links. Also called one way backlinks, inbound links and non-reciprocal links. I tend to just call them “backlinks”, and for the purpose of this ebook will refer to them simply as “links”, as these are the only type of links we are interested in building. A one way link occurs when a page on a website links to a page on your, but without you linking back to their site from any page on your website.

One way backlinks are the holy grail. Why? Because at the simplest level the more links you have pointing at your site, the higher it will rank. Each link is a “vote” for your sites relevance and popularity, the more powerful the voting page, the more powerful the link is. Yes this is simplistic, but essentially that is what it boils down to.

3.. Three way links. These are a way to “game” the system and obtain backlinks. Basically, page A, agrees to link to Page B, who agrees to link to page C, creating a one way backlink for all three pages. Completely against Google's terms of use, and easy to target once the patterns have been spotted, I suggest forgetting you ever read this paragraph.

To help you understand how powerful links are, I will refer to some statistics. SEOMOZ.org sends out a regular questionnaire to industry experts, which are collated into a detailed report. In relation to the factors that are currently taken into account for deciding on the ranking of a webpage, their opinion is as follows:

- 24% Trust/Authority of the host domain
- 22% Link Popularity of the Specific Page
- 20% Anchor Text of External Links
- 15% On-Page Keyword Usage
- 7% Traffic and Click-Through Data
- 6% Social Graph Metrics
- 5% Registration and Hosting Data

As you can see, link popularity and link anchor text account for 42% of the total factors it is believed Google takes into account when

ranking a webpage.

So now you know the reality, you can allow yourself a smile the next time you read people on a forum obsessing over nonsense such as keyword density and other on-page factors. No matter how much time they spend, on-page SEO can only ever produce 15% of the results!

You however now know where the focus of your efforts should now be. You are also now aware of how essential solid keyword research is, as anchor text links containing the right keywords and terms are little blocks of link gold.

# ***Linkbuilding In The Real World.***

Before we delve into the body of The LinkBuilders Bible I think it is vital to paint a picture of what you will read about on the authoritative SEO blogs and sites, and the real world you will actually be operating in.

No matter how it is described, or what names are attributed to the factors involved, we all basically know what a “great” link will look like, no matter how little experience we have. It is a link with keyword anchor text, on a relevant content page with high PageRank value, that sits on an old domain, with tons of content, visitors and tons of links from all around the net.

*It is the link on a site you want to get a link from, but ignore because you know you can't.*

It is the sort of link you will read about getting all the time on sites such as SEOmoz.org. What is never explained however is how you actually get them! You will read millions of words from the “experts” on what to look for, but then you are left dangling.

*Why is this?*

Quite simply because you cannot place your own link on a powerful domain, and you will get ignored no matter how you approach the site owners, or what you offer them.

What the big boys in SEO won't tell you is that once they sniff out these sites, or in many cases already know them anyway, they use incentives to get the links. This basically means they will quietly pay for a link, offer content or services in return for the link, or they network with those sites and have relationships they can call on. No matter how hard you try, you cannot do this alone in most cases.

So lets be clear, the Linkbuilders Bible deals with linkbuilding in the real world, and is relevant to individuals who cannot afford to pay an

SEO company \$1000 a month.

You have to remember that SEO/Linkbuilding is an industry, and a very lucrative one. It is the interests of that industry to give you all the information you need to get to the front door, but then to leave you standing there without a key to get through it. Why? Because eventually most people will get fed-up and pay an SEO company to do it instead.

This is a vital point and one to always bear in mind. Linkbuilding is NOT THAT COMPLICATED, but it is incredibly easy to get drawn into a world of endless analysis, searching and procrastination without ever building any links! **Do not fall into that trap.**

## **Link “Power”.**

There are a variety of factors that make a link “powerful”. What these factors are is open to debate however.

To strip things down to basics, each link to a webpage is a vote, and the page with the most votes and the most relevant content will win and be top of the SERP. Simplistic, but that is essentially what happens. The thing to remember is that not all links have an equal vote. Remember the old Soviet Communist countries in the UN? Even though they had one vote each, they voted together as a block, in effect casting a single powerful vote. It is the same with links, some powerful sites with high trust etc across their domain, have the power of a block vote.

Some high-profile SEO experts claim that the much used term “domain authority” does not actually exist, and that a site's power comes purely from its internal link structure, massive amounts of fresh content and lots of links to it including significant deep-links. This is why, they say, Wikipedia ranks so well, even though as an “authority” it is actually quite poor in many cases.

The evidence does appear to be that an authority algorithm is being used (Ask's Teoma Algorithm being one example) in various forms, and is linked to the subjects of “Hub” sites, TrustRank, topical relevance and topical authority, which we will cover later.

A lot of people will swear that a domains age counts for a lot in terms of the strength of a site, and therefore the value of the links it can offer, while others will say that newer domains can be just as powerful.

Others are convinced that the “power” of a site lays in its PageRank. This obviously only applies to Google's algorithm. It is a factor, and we will discuss it in detail later, but PR is only one of an admitted “more than 100 measures” taken into account when determining how a site ranks.

However, as with so many things in SEO, the only people who know what makes a site “powerful” are the people who write the search engine algorithm's. Everything else is educated guesswork, no matter how authoritative the SEO expert sounds or reads!

The two things that appear to count for the most based on researching the evidence currently out there are:

1. Link popularity – the volume of links to your site.
2. Anchor text relevance to target page content.

There are clearly a lot of other interlocking features as to what makes a link powerful, but it appears that the good old measures of volume and anchor text relevance still top the list of influencing factors.

The simple fact is that some sites are more powerful than others in terms of the boost a link from their site will give you in the SERP's, often for reasons people cannot state clearly. That is why I will just refer to the “power” of certain links. As you build more and more links, you will see what works, what doesn't and what gives your site the biggest boost's.

# ***Classifying Links.***

I classify links in three ways, based simply on how easy they are to obtain.

Class 1 links are links that absolutely anyone can generate in large numbers, quickly and without needing any particular skills or knowledge. These can be virtually worthless individually. They become powerful if we build them in bulk. You can rank very well using a large number of low-value links, but it is important that you will rank better and for longer if you can find a relatively small number of truly quality links.

The search engines, and especially Google place a lot more value on the overall number of links than they will admit. That is why you will routinely look at a SERP and wonder how a site is ranking so well (usually above yours for you to take notice!). It is simply because they are steadily growing a large volume of fresh links. That is the major reason why linkbuilding is a job that is never, ever finished, especially for small sites fighting for the “longtail”.

Class 2 links are links that require some time, effort and skill to build, or are Level 1 links that have been “powered up” through a trick, nurturing them, or some lateral thinking.

Class 3 links are those which you just cannot make yourself. You need to find a way to interact or influence someone to get these links, either through putting good content under their noses or by influencing them in some way.

I would also add here that a small sub-group of Class 1 links perhaps should probably be Class 2. There is a small group of social bookmarking and article sites that have rigorous human editorial team's. It is this fact that makes it more difficult to get your content (and links) accepted, and the potentially higher authority of those sites makes getting a link onto them more powerful.

Two examples of this would be [Propeller.com](http://Propeller.com) and [EzineArticles.com](http://EzineArticles.com). Both of these sites can be tougher to get your article/story onto, but the authority of their domain means a potentially more powerful link is obtained.

### ***Class 1: Low Level Links***

- Social bookmarking & pinging
- Reciprocal link exchanges
- Forum signature links
- Directory submissions
- Article creation
- Blog commenting
- Creating Web 2.0 properties & Blogs
- Press releases
- Profile links
- Paid & Incentivized links

### ***Class 2: Mid Level Links***

- Powering-up Level 1 links
- Guest blogging
- Quality Directory submissions such as DMOZ
- Quality profile links
- A natural link from another website

### ***Class 3 – High Level Links***

These are the links we all aspire to, such as natural placement on high PR pages etc. Examples include:

- Wikipedia links (nofollow, but yes still very powerful)
- Links on highly trusted, authority sites

# The Main Types of User Generated Links.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Social bookmarking</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Submitting your URL's to social bookmarking websites. Examples include Digg, Stumbleupon and Reddit.
<b>PRO's</b>	Quick and easy to do either manually, using bookmarklets or using an automated tool such as bookmarking demon. Not only are submissions one way backlinks in their own right, but they are also good for getting pages and links indexed by Google and for planting potential linkbait.
<b>CON's</b>	Low level links, and increasingly down-valued and not properly spidered by Google. Also the larger sites such as Digg now attach the "nofollow" attribute to submitted links.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Reciprocal link exchanges</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Link exchanges are organised through forums, by email or on specialist directory sites. The principle is the same in all cases, both parties agree to show a link on an agreed page to the others site. This creates a reciprocal link.
<b>PRO's</b>	It is easy to build volume reciprocal links through a variety of means, including forums and link exchange sites. Reciprocal links are easier to build with sites within your niche as people are more happy to give, even to a potential rival, if they get something back of equal value.
<b>CON's</b>	Excessive reciprocal linking is specifically mentioned in Google's Webmaster Guidelines as something that is looked for and actively penalized. Also the value of a reciprocal link is far less than that of a one way link, yet the time and effort to build one is roughly the same, if not more time consuming. Very easy to abuse trust and time consuming to check.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Directory submissions</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Either manually or using submission software, submit your site and info about it to a range of internet directories.
<b>PRO's</b>	May generate some traffic or hold value if the directory is established and in a relevant niche. Authority directories such as DMOZ still hold some weight.
<b>CON's</b>	Google has been able to spot and ignore or devalue links built on the majority of spammy internet directories now. Most directories are there purely for people to drop links on, and are therefore seen as of no value to the internet user. The time or money spent on mass directory submissions is nowadays a waste of time, unless you are one of those who still ignores the advice and evidence and believes them of value, in which case this Bible will be lost on you anyway! Focus on a few submissions to quality and relevant niche directories only.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Article creation</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Write about a subject that allows you to include your targeted keywords and terms, and then submit it to an article directory.
<b>PRO's</b>	Gains you a page of relevant content on an "authority" domain, and an anchor text link in the profile/bio field. Articles can also be "spun" (multiple versions created using software) to generate variations for mass article submissions to avoid duplicate content being ignored.
<b>CON's</b>	Time consuming to write, and requires a degree of skill to construct effective and compelling articles. It also takes skill to research keywords and then to weave them naturally into your articles to avoid being rejected as spam by the more reputable article sites.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Blog commenting</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Either manually through searching, or using an automated program, submit comments to lo posts. The aim is to get them authorised by the blog owner, so that you comment appears under the blog post. The name you enter becomes a hyperlink if you also enter a website URL when adding your comment, creating one way backlinks with keyword anchor text.
<b>PRO's</b>	Very easy to add in bulk using one of the many programs out there, or even to do manually using Google and searching for "footprints".
<b>CON's</b>	Blog comments are extremely low value links unless you are lucky to get a comment authorized on an authority domain. There is an art to writing comments that will be approved, and using a keyword as your name rather than a real name increases the chance of rejection.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Creating Web 2.0 properties &amp; Blogs</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Open an account with one of thousands of sites that allow you to build a hosted site or blog, and then post relevant content to it and link to your own site, creating your own link from a relevant site. To increase the value of these links, see the section on "powering up" your generated content and using it to protect your main site.
<b>PRO's</b>	Relatively easy to do once you have generated a lot of content to use, and can be automated using programs such as Senuke.
<b>CON's</b>	Increasingly difficult to get these properties indexed, or out of the supplemental index. Many providers, such as Squidoo are now cracking down on blatant content-for-links accounts, mainly due to Google leaning on them to clean up their acts or face penalties it is rumoured.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Press releases</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Write a compelling headline and body text, then submit to one or more press release websites.
<b>PRO's</b>	Creates a one way backlink to your site, and also stands a very small chance of being picked up for a story or acting as linkbait.
<b>CON's</b>	Most free PR sites are swamped with rubbish every day making them worthless. Quality sites such as prweb.com cost upwards of \$60 per submission.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Profile links and pages</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Create a profile on a site that fits the criteria of allowing links to be added within a profile, that profiles are publically viewable (i.e. can be seen by search engine spiders for indexing), and do not have a "nofollow" attribute added. A lot of people online know of this tactic as "Angela Edwards" links, as this is the name of the person who made this tactic mainstream knowledge.
<b>PRO's</b>	Easy to find these sites using many cheap "packet" providers, and can be automated using a piece of new software called SEO Link Dominator.
<b>CON's</b>	The popular link packet providers have become victims of their own success and are now over subscribed.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Paid &amp; Incentivized links</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Find a site offering to link to you for money or an incentive.
<b>PRO's</b>	Easy to do and links are usually from quality pages.
<b>CON's</b>	Completely against Googles TOS, and will get you slapped out of the index for a reported year or more if you are found buying links for the purpose of influencing your ranking. This is one of the things that Google's Web Spam Team is very hot on seeking out and punishing. If you do it, do it quietly and only with sites who you know will keep it quiet.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
<b>HOW</b>	Create profiles, pages and groups on sites such as Facebook and Myspace that can be accessed without logging in, and place links.
<b>PRO's</b>	Easy to do, and potential for linkbait if you can generate interest from visitors. Although the larger social media sites seem to now be “nofollowed” (unless you prove they can trust you in some cases), there are hundreds of smaller, niche sites out there to target.
<b>CON's</b>	Most social sites are now closed unless you are logged in and/or external links have the “nofollow” attribute added to deter placing links.

## **Essentials: Having a natural link profile.**

If you want to avoid the unwanted attentions of Google's webspam team, then you will need to always ensure that you are building a “natural” link profile. I know, I know, it's not natural, but everyone else is doing it, so the point here is not to get caught out.

Imagine you are Google. You simply find all the one way links pointing to a site and then, should you desire, you can analyze those links to create a link profile. If you found that nearly every single link pointing at a site was from a hosted wordpress blog, you would wonder why right?

If you then looked and found that not a single link had the “nofollow” attribute, when an estimated 10% of the links on the net now contain that attribute, you would be suspicious right? You need to have a similar ratio of followed to nofollowed links.

So don't fall into that trap because its “easy” to build a certain type of site, or you have software that helps you do it, or because you have become obsessed with avoiding nofollow links. Mix it up!

Another part of having a natural link profile is having IP DIVERSITY. Using the previous example, no matter how many hosted

wordpress blogs you make, all will be hosted on the same range of IP addresses, ie the same numbered internet address. There is some evidence that Google discounts the value of links to the same site from the same IP range.

Although this is inconclusive and has not been confirmed or denied by any search engine, my advice is to only place a handful of links per IP address range.

Also be aware not to post multiple identical blog comments etc to the same blogs if you go down that route, as this would be strong evidence for your webhost that you are spamming should they receive a complaint from the blog/site owner!

*Why take the risk when there are literally millions of blog and site hosts out there?*

# **Link Velocity**

Also called link acquisition, link velocity is something that you need to be aware of and it forms part of having a natural link profile.

Link velocity and is most apparent with new websites. Site owners go mad building links through press releases, campaigns etc that bring them in a quick amount of links. However, that volume of links quickly peaks, and then just as quickly as it grows, it falls back down to its “natural” level, which is usually virtually no new links being grown naturally.

This is something you need to be aware of, as an extreme growth and fall pattern can lead to you being scrutinised and possibly penalized if the search engine finds you have been building lots of those links manually. In other words, as the links drop off, the build-up of momentum to the site drops. As this momentum drops, so your pages will steadily rank lower and lower.

This partly explains why people talk of Google having a “sandbox” for new sites, where there is an initial spurt up the SERP's, and then rather than staying there, their site drops like a stone despite having lots of links to the site, before eventually settling in its “natural” position.

So when you build your links, plan for continual growth. Build by varied means, continually and at a similar rate each day/week/month. Take things to the next level only as your site grows in stature and can sustain a permanent “jump” in the SERP's as it grows in authority and trust with the search engine, topics we are going to cover next.

***A quick frenzy of linkbuilding can therefore be a complete waste of time if you do not plan for sustaining it at some level.***

## ***Link Popularity.***

Very simply, *link popularity* is a search engine ranking measure, that refers to the total number of links pointing to a domain, which takes into account the both the “power” and quantity of the links involved.

This means that a site with 7 Class 3 links pointing at it could have a higher link popularity than a site with 500 Class 1 links. However, importantly for us down in the real world, sheer volume can overcome individual powerful links, most of the time.

It is important to be aware that link popularity is not just the *volume* of links but also take into account the *power* of all the links involved. There are lot of people out there using free link popularity check tools who are being misled into thinking it refers to purely the total number of inbound links.

## ***Topical Relevance.***

Constant growth of new links, mixed with new on-site content also helps to build a sites *topical relevance*. Consider, if you started a site 10 years ago, but it has had no updated content or fresh links to it for 8 years, how relevant is that site likely to be now in the eyes of a search engine? Building your topical relevance through anchor text linkbuilding and fresh content on-site will also mean that your site becomes linked to a widening number of related search terms.

Stats suggest that up to 50% of internet searches are completely new, but over time as other people do the same searches, or variations on them, they become associated within certain broader topics. Ensuring your site remains topically relevant through its on-site and off-site growth, will help your site to benefit from these new search phrase relationships as they are discovered and developed.

Eventually your site may gain enough topical relevance to be seen

as a *topical authority* resource. Most other sites in your niche will by that stage be linking to your authoritative content. This is at the centre of the “natural linkbuilding” ideology advocated by Google.

## ***TrustRank.***

Another thing to be aware of is **TrustRank**. This is how Wikipedia explains it:

*“TrustRank method calls for selecting a small set of seed pages to be evaluated by an expert. Once the reputable seed pages are manually identified, a crawl extending outward from the seed set seeks out similarly reliable and trustworthy pages. TrustRank's reliability diminishes as documents become further removed from the seed set.”*

How it works, simplistically, is that there is a core of sites in the search engines indexes that are “trusted”. These are the quality sites that everyone uses and which have a long history of being reliable. Sites receiving links from those sites will also be 99% trusted. Those sites also have links out, and their targets will also receive a higher degree of trust.

The further you follow links out from these trusted sites you go however, the less trusted the sites and links will be. Three clicks from the central site, research for Yahoo in 2004 estimated the spam ratio as 14% for example.

*Getting as close as possible to centre of these “circles of trust” (remember Robert DeNiro in Meet The Parents?) is obviously beneficial.*

**TOP TIP:** SEObook HubFinder tool

To find out much more about how authority and highly trusted sites are interlinked, you could use the premium Hubfinder tool at [SEObook.com](http://SEObook.com).

So who is linking to you, who you link to, and who they in turn are receiving and giving links to is important. However, do not get obsessed with this. A quick glance at a site and clicking on a few links will usually be enough to see if the site is from a “bad neighborhood”, ie, potentially lacking in trust in the eyes of the search engines.

If you wish to spend time researching however, discovering and obtaining links from a site as close to a trusted site as possible could pay dividends. A tool such as SEOMOZ's [Linkscape](#) may be invaluable in helping you with this.

## **Essentials: Nofollow Links**

You will no doubt have seen the term “nofollow” thrown around forums like confetti in the wind. So what exactly is nofollow and why do you need to be aware of it?

One of the biggest problems Google faced a while back was the issue of paid links. People were paying for thousands and thousands of links to be pointed at their pages from huge farms of sites offering those links for a price. They also wanted to address the growing problem of blog comment spam.

So the nofollow attribute was conceived by Google’s head of webspam team Matt Cutts, and Jason Shellen from Blogger.com back in 2005. The idea was that by adding that attribute to a link you would allow it to be a link for people to click on, but make it worthless in terms of passing PageRank to the target sites ranking calculation. The aim was to stop comment spam in its tracks, and to penalize people paying for links which did not contain the nofollow attribute (negating the whole point of a paid link).

Google, Yahoo and Bing all now recognise the nofollow attribute to some degree and penalise or ignore links containing it. However, the forgotten search engine “Ask” ignores the nofollow tag at the time of writing, which is another compelling reason to build nofollowed links.

### ***So what does it look like?***

If you view the source code of a page and look at an HTML link with nofollow it will look like this:

```
<a href="http://yoursite.com" rel="nofollow">Link anchor text</a>
```

A lot of big sites that allow user-input, such as Yahoo answers, use

nofollow for external links. It is something to be aware of, and another reason to always have the Firefox plugin “NoDoFollow” turned on whenever you are online, so that you can instantly see what is nofollowed.

*So I should ignore nofollow links then?*

Absolutely not! It is important to remember that there are more than three search engines, and many others see a link, as a link, as a link. Also, although PageRank is not passed in Google's calculations by nofollow links, PR is not the only way a webpage's rank is determined.

As the internet moves on, the search engines are moving into other ways of calculating a site's relevance to a particular search. Google has removed PageRank from its Webmaster Tools accounts, and seems to be starting a process of moving away from PageRank. This is great news if it happens, as too many website owners see PR as the goal, rather than as something to help them get to the goal. PR has become a “badge” to brag about, even if that high PR site has few visitors, or does not convert its visitors to members or sales.

It is wise to be aware of which links carry the nofollow attribute, and to obtain followed links as a priority. However a link is a link, and there is evidence from various tests to suggest the nofollowed links do still carry some benefit, despite Google saying they do not. So build links and worry about nofollow second.

## **Essentials: Link Anchor Text**

A link either has anchor text or it does not. If it does not have anchor text then it is simply a URL link, so the search engine will see it is simply as a link called “www.yoursite.com/page” which points at that page.

If it has anchor text then it will be formatted as:

```
<a href="http://www.yoursite.com/page">anchor text</a>
```

The search engine now has more to go on. It can not only see where the link goes, but also the context of that link. On following the link to your site, it can then judge how much the context of that link matches the context of the page it is linking to.

But how important is relevant anchor text?

Well I personally would say it is vital, but then as with most things involved in SEO and linkbuilding, it is relative to your situation.

Lets take this classic example.

Do a search on Google for “click here”. The first result is....Adobe acrobat reader's download page. Weird huh?

Now visit that page.

Can you see the term “click here” anywhere on that page?

It's not there is it!

So why does that page rank at number one for a term is has no obvious relation to?

The reason is two-fold, and the point is demonstrates is vital. Adobe is a massively powerful website. Millions of visitors, millions of links to it and tons of content. It is without doubt an “authority”

site, whatever that actually means, and it's PageRank is 8, which is something very few sites can aspire to achieving. It is undoubtedly a seriously influential domain.

So the page ranks for an unrelated search term for three reasons:

1. The “power” of the page itself.
2. The volume of links pointing to it.
3. The power of the links pointing to it.

*(TIP: Adobe have sign-up option that allows you to create an account and drop a followed link in your profile...)*

As you can see, although anchor text is important, it is not vital. Volume, and the power of the webpages linking to your site are also a vital factor in the equation.

Wherever possible build links with anchor text matching the optimised term on the target page. If two equal links are placed alongside each other, but then one has anchor text added to it, that is the link that will get you the most benefit.

I have seen, as will you, that for longtail search terms, you can rank well, even if most of your links are non-anchor text links. This is especially true the more links you have. It may take you hundreds of these links against the competing pages handful of quality, anchor text links, but it can be done.

# Google PageRank.

If I could turn back time (Cher anyone?), I would go back and shoot everyone involved in creating PageRank. I don't mean those involved in making it part of the ranking algorithm, I mean the guy who said "let's make it publically available".

Why did you suggest it???

If you visit any SEO forum you will see at least one thread discussing PageRank, full of people asking how they can increase their PR. When you ask them their reason for wanting to increase it, you rarely get an answer, and if you do it usually reveals a total ignorance of what PR actually is doing for them. An awful lot of people think that high PR = high rankings.

*Do not fall into the trap of thinking that obtaining high PR webpages is the goal.*

Not convinced? Do a Google search for a keyword/term in your niche, and for each of the top 20 sites (first 2 pages) write down the PageRank as shown in the Google toolbar of your browser (if you have it), or by using the SEO for Firefox plugin. Is there a pattern? Nope, didn't think there would be!

So many people stare at that little green line and take it as a measure of the success of their site that it is no surprise that Google is actually starting to take a step away from talking about and publicising PageRank. The dreaded little green bar in the Google toolbar is now about half the size it was. It has also been removed from Google Webmaster tools accounts, and this is what Matt Cutt's has said about PR in his blog:

*"My advice is not to obsess about PageRank too much; it is one of more than 100 different factors in how we score documents. "*

Still not convinced?

Ok, this is what Matt says about the the updating of the publically available 1-10 PR scores:

*“It’s not a big event here at Google. Frankly, I didn’t even know we’d done our 3-4 month-ish push of this data. “*

and...

*“By the time you see newer PageRanks in the toolbar, those values have already been incorporated in how we score/rank our search results. So while you may be happy to see that the Google Toolbar shows a little more PageRank for a given page, it’s not as if that causes a change in search results at that point.”*

and finally...

*“Lots of folks ask questions like: “Is this PageRank from day X or day Y? And it looks like backlinks are from day Z?”*

*Really, I wouldn’t worry about it—I’m not even sure myself. At some point we take our internal PageRanks, put them on a 0-10 scale, and export them so that they’re visible to Google Toolbar users. If you’re splitting hairs about the exact date that backlinks were taken from, you’re probably suffering from “B.O.” (backlink obsession) and should stop and go do something else for a bit until the backlink obsession passes. I highly recommend keyword analysis, looking at server logs to figure out new content to add, thinking of new hooks to make your site attract more word-of-mouth buzz, pondering how to improve conversion once visitors land on your site, etc.”*

If after reading that lot you still feel that focusing solely on growing your PR is essential, then there is no hope for you!

Focus on building links, and focus on converting the visitors you do get to taking further action on your site.

***Having said all that.....***

There are two scenario's where having a 100% focus on the PR of your site and actively increasing it is vital.

“What? But you said...?”

Yeah I know, but as I have just explained, some people out there obsess about PR. So if you are selling to them, then high PR is

valuable!

Do you sell websites? Which will get a higher price, from two identical sites with identical traffic and income? The one with the higher PR score on its index page of course!

Selling on-site links? Which page will earn the most money, even if the links are nofollowed, the one with PR0 or PR4?

So yes, PR can matter if you are selling to the people who are obsessed with it.

Another thing to point out is that it is called PAGE Rank for a reason – it is the power of that page, not the site as a whole. Saying you have a “PR6” website means nothing. It means that your index page has a PR6, not that every page on the site is PR6. You will derive **some** benefit from a page close to the high PR page (as long as the links to that page and your link are not nofollowed of course), but if you are being linked to from a page on the site that is 8 links away from the high PR page, how much PR do you think is being passed on? Not a lot!

One final point I will make on PR and its place in practical, real-world linkbuilding, is to talk about ***PR investment***.

Read any linkbuilding forum and you will see people refusing links from, or talking of filtering out potential links to their site because the page is “only a PR1”, or “has no PR”.

Hmm. Ask yourself, is that a sensible strategy considering what we now know about the accuracy of visible PR. We know that the actual PR could be *significantly different*.

Think about this term when considering what sites to get a link from:

***PR investment***

If the site is a spammy load of old rubbish, then yes ignore it. However if the site is PR0, but is well designed, full of information, frequently updated and overall the owner looks like they are building it for the long term, would you be short sighted for not getting a link onto their site. The answer is of course yes. That site will likely give an increasingly powerful link for years to come.

PR is part of how Google determines the ranking “power” of a page, and the strength of the links that come from it. So yes, be aware of PageRank, and if a page appears to have decent PR, then by all means try and get a link on it, but do not let PR become the only benchmark for deciding where you get your links from.

**TOP TIP:** Linkscape's mozRank

Although Google only publish PAGERank, you can get a similar assessment of the overall domain PR, by using SEOMOZ's Linkscape tools. mozRank is their own version of PR, but it also publishes domain-level scores, if you feel that type of information filtering is worth using.

The free domain check is [available here](#).

## ***Deep-Linking.***

You may have heard of deep linking. It is mentioned a lot on forums. It means a link to a page on your site other than the main index page, or a significant section index page.

Most sites have the majority of links pointing at their main index page only, or perhaps a small number of other “main” pages that each lead to other content pages. This creates a few *superpages* while potentially leaving some of your pages, optimized for a specific keyword, with little power to rank well.

So deep linking is a strategy you need to be aware of. All you need to do is ensure you build links to all the pages of your site, rather than just your main page. The truly natural links that you get will tend to be pointed at your main pages, so focussing your linkbuilding efforts on increasing the power of your lesser pages will help your whole site to rank well and work harder for you.

Another reason to deep link, is that it appears more natural. People link to content for a specific reason, not just to hompages, so by broadening your linkbuilding, you will also appear more natural to the Googlemonster.

# **Are Some Links More Valuable Than Others?**

Some people will swear that a link from a .edu or .gov domain is more valuable. While this may have been the case years ago, the evidence suggests it is not now. This is what Matt Cutts had to say about it:

*“Typically, our policy is: a link is a link, is a link; wherever that link’s worth is, that is the worth that we give it. Some people ask about links from DMOZ, links from .edu or links from .gov, and they say: “Isn’t there some sort of boost? Isn’t a link better if it comes from a .edu?” The short answer is: no, it is not. It is just .edu links tend to have higher PageRank, because more people link to .edu’s or .gov’s.”*

So it would seem that a link, is a link, is a link. Edu and Gov sites appear to gain link power through meeting the criteria we have already outlined, ie, having a natural link profile mixed with high topical relevance, trust and steady ongoing link growth from other quality sites.

# **Strategy: Protect Your Site...**

## **By Not Linking To It!**

If you check out the links pointing to most sites, the overwhelming majority of those links point at the main homepage, usually known as the index page. This is not the best way to build a powerful website.

You should aim to build links to all of the pages of your site, to build the power of each page, helping it to rank better for its targeted keyword on its own, rather than being lifted up by the linking power of your main page.

*This is where you need to get clever.*

Only build good quality links to your actual site pages. Don't fall into the trap of pointing a mass of spammed blog comments at your site for example. You are also then minimising the chance of the site owner visiting your site and sending your wehost or domain registrar a spam complaint.

You are looking to maximise your linking potential while at the same time minimising your risk of being penalized. In effect, I am talking about building a “firewall” between your spammy links and your main site pages, helping to protect it from the attentions of Google.

### ***So what do you do with all those Class 1 links?***

Simple, you use them to “power-up” you generated content. You will only do this of course if you are going to use generated content. Some people may not wish to get involved in what they may view as manipulation, so if your are one of those people who will not be generating your own content, then you can ignore this part.

## **HOW TO: Power-Up Your Links**

For those still reading, I am going to explain why and how we “power-up” your generated content.

What we are doing here is creating a blog or mini-site on a hosted platform such as Squidoo, or Wordpress.com. We are then going to add several pages/posts to each to make a site full of content that is relevant to your main site. We are then going to link to your site, creating a link from relevant content. We are then going to power up the posts/pages to give them greater power as links.

The first step is to create generated content using articles (either unique, spun or a combination of both), you will need at least 3 articles per site/blog and I recommend starting by building 10 sites, so 30 articles. There are many websites and programs out there that will help you to write and spin your articles.

You then need to create accounts, and post your articles. Within the text of each article you then include an anchor text link to your own site.

**TOP TIP:** Within each article also include a link to a relevant, high authority site within your niche. So if your niche is SEO for example, then include a link to a site such as seomoz.org. It is not that widely known, but including authority outbound links can actually improve the weight/authority of your own page.

When you finish each site, go to the main URL, and the URL of each post created via your browser, and copy that URL into a text file. At the end you should have 40 URL's in the file. If the site has an RSS feed (Wordpress sites will) then just copy that instead.

Once you have created your content sites you need to get them indexed quickly (see How To: Quick Indexing).

Now we are going to power-up those pages. I suggest automating this process as much as possible, so please also read the How To: Automating Your Linkbuilding section.

Whatever method of link creation you use, you are now going to create lots, and lots, and lots of Level 1 links to your saved URL's over time. Don't go mad, keep building them steadily, aiming for around 10 to each URL per week.

The effect of this is two-fold:

1. It will eventually drag your site out of Google's supplemental index.
2. Over time your generated content will gain PageRank of its own, creating a Level 2 link to your site.

## ***Relevancy Is Irrelevant....For Now!***

Go on any forum where linkbuilding is being discussed, and you will read, almost word for word, the same responses being peddled.

*“Only get links from relevant sites, they are worth more and you may get penalized for non-relevant links”.*

**This is the ideal, but is it the truth?**

In my experience, and the experience of many others, it simply is not true. Matt Cutts has perhaps tried to spread some disinformation suggesting relevant links are the only ones you

should consider, but without actually saying that they are more powerful links.

Why? Quite simply because relevancy is irrelevant at the moment.

I have done my own experiment and managed a page 1 SERP using only non-relevant links. Other people, such as Terry Kyle on the Warrior forum, have also done similar, in-depth experiments using a mix of sites and relevant/off-topic links, with the same conclusion being reached.

And finally, this is what Rand Fishkin, owner of influential SEO website SEOMoz.org, and shoulder-rubber of Matt Cutts had to say on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009:

*“To be totally honest, I don’t think the content relationship (relevancy) or matching subject matter has much of an impact in the algo right now. Off-topic links, so long as they’re from powerful, trustworthy sources, seem to help just as much as those with topical matches.*

*It may seem weird, but I know I’m far from the only SEO to have observed this phenomenon.....”*

Without doubt the best type of links to build are of course relevant ones, for one major reason above all others: your site visitors experience.

We have already covered the positive ranking factors you can enjoy from utilising topical relevance and trust, however there are other things that I believe are currently over riding those ideals.

Quite simply, just like people, websites do not all fit neatly into pigeon holes. Things like TrustRank are perfect for non-commercial subject matter, but where you factor in variables such as commercialism, is I think where the current non-relevant loophole is explained.

In many niches you simply cannot get relevant links, mainly because all the relevant sites are your competitors! There simply is no way for the ideology of topical relevance and trust to work 100%,

and it is made worse by the lack of text on many commercial sites to build that relevance past a few keywords.

So my theory is that the power of factors such as co-citation, TrustRank and topical relevance have had to be “turned down” to take account of the fact that many categories of website simply cannot be assessed in the same way.

Whatever the reasons, the growing body of practical evidence is clear. That relevant links currently do not seem to offer any more power than irrelevant links, as long as they come from a decent source.

## **HOW TO: Quick Indexing**

Once you have placed a link, or generated some content to create your own relevant links, there is not time to sit back and feel pleased with yourself. Your work so far means nothing if those links and pages are not found by the search engines right?

There are three main ways that will dramatically increase the chances of your links and sites being found and indexed:

1. Submitting your Sites RSS feed to RSS directories
2. Submitting URLs and RSS feeds to Social Bookmarking and Ping sites

There is also another bonus for the time you spend doing this. Each submission also creates a link to your site in its own right, so you are not only increasing the chances of links getting indexed, but you are creating more links while you do it!

### **RSS Feed Submissions.**

There are two ways to build and submit RSS feeds, manually and free, or automatically and investing a bit of cash in getting that automation.

To create an RSS feed manually I can do not better than to point you at [this tutorial](#) which explains how to do it by hand, using notepad. Of course you only need to do this for sites that do not already have an RSS feed (you saved all those RSS feed URLs when you created the sites right...?).

When it comes to submitting your RSS feed for free, probably the best free resources for doing so [feedssubmitter.com](#) and [ipings.com](#) which will submit a single RSS feed to 10-20 services. There is

also a list of 50+ sites in the resources section.

The problem is that it takes time to submit each feed one at a time. Wouldn't it be great if there was something out there that did it for you in seconds?

I use this great little program to submit my RSS feeds automatically to 58 RSS directory sites:

### RSS Feed Submitter

We will cover more on RSS in a "How TO" on getting one way links from RSS later.

### **Social Bookmarking.**

There are two ways to quickly submit a page to social bookmarking sites such as Digg and Stumbleupon. The first way is to add what are known as "bookmarklets" to the bookmarking toolbar in the Firefox browser, and the second is to use a program to automate it on a grand scale.

So lets set-up a load of bookmarklets on our bookmarking toolbar in Firefox. Obviously you will need a copy of [Firefox](#), if you do not already use it. You then need to reveal the bookmarking toolbar, by going to the View menu in Firefox, selecting toolbars, and then selecting Bookmarks toolbar.

Next click on these links one by one and follow the instructions for installing each bookmarklet, which usually just means dragging an icon to the Bookmarking toolbar and then releasing your mouse button to place it there.

<http://digg.com/tools/diggbar>

<http://www.blinklist.com/user/step-1>

<http://www.folkd.com/page/download.html>

<http://www.propeller.com/help/api/bookmarklets/>

<http://www.firefoxfacts.com/2007/09/21/use-stumbleupon-without-the-toolbar/>

<http://delicious.com/help/bookmarklets>

Another method that takes a bit more time to set-up, but is ultimately far more effective is to use [Social Marker](#). I highly recommend you take the time to discover the how powerful it can be for you. My top tip to make using it even quicker is to

## **Pinging.**

Pinging is a process of notifying a variety of services that you have updated content, through sending a “ping”. The most used ping service is ping-o-matic.

For [Ping-o-matic](#) do this:

1. Right click on your Bookmarking toolbar in Firefox.
2. Select “new bookmark”.
3. Name it “Pingomatic”.
4. Copy and paste the code below into the location field.
5. Save it.

```
javascript:(function(){var%20url=encodeURIComponent(window.location);var%20name=encodeURIComponent(document.title);%20var%20rss%20="";var%20links=document.getElementsByTagName('link');for%20(i=0;i%3Clinks.length;i++){if(links[i].getAttribute('type')%20==%20'application/rss+xml'){%20rss=encodeURIComponent(links[i].getAttribute('href'));}%20window.location='http://pingomatic.com/ping/?title='+name+'&blogurl='+url+'&rssurl='+rss+'&chk_weblogscom=on&chk_blogs=on&chk_technorati=on&chk_feedburner=on&chk_syndic8=on&chk_newsgator=on&chk_myyahoo=on&chk_pubsubcom=on&chk_blogdigger=on&chk_blogrolling=on&chk_blogstreet=on&chk_moreover=on&chk_weblogalot=on&chk_icerocket=on&chk_newsisfree=on&chk_topicexchange=on&chk_google=on&chk_tailrank=on&chk_bloglines=on;'})(
```

Another timesaver is to use [ping.fm](http://ping.fm), which allows you to do the same thing as bookmarklets and pings, but with a load of networks.

To update via your toolbar bookmarklets, simply be on the page you want to submit and then click a bookmarklet. The first time you submit you will have to create an account or login.

Now the fully automated way of doing it is simply to use one of the automation programs out there. My personal recommendation on this is [Bookmarking Demon](#). Simply install, add details, and go.

## ***Creating And Spreading Linkbait.***

What is “linkbait”? Well it is exactly as it sounds really, you are creating bait to get links. To be more descriptive, you are putting a bit of juicy bait on the end of a fishing line and casting it as far as you can to try and get a bite.

Linkbait is very closely linked to, and sometimes a part of, viral marketing.

*So why would you do it?*

Well, because the linkbait you spread will contain a link to your page, and therefore every time it is spread further, you gain more links and traffic.

***Yeah sounds great but how can I make it?***

The classic forms of linkbait are as follows:

Web tools  
Quizzes  
Competitions & prize draws  
News “scoops”  
Controversy/Shock  
Awards  
Lists  
Humour  
Designs and graphics  
Research findings and statistical analysis  
“Cool” stuff

Now, I know what you are thinking. You are thinking “how can I do any of those things? Where do I start?” I am not going outline everything for you, as the only way to find your own path is to roll your sleeves up and to start doing, and in doing....learn. What I will do here is outline some detail on each to get your creative mind working.

### **Web tools**

A web tool could be anything from a fully-blown program, to a simple “widget”. If you have no grand ideas or technical ability then a widget is a great place to start.

To see hundreds of widgets in action and to get some ideas, visit [widgetbox](#) and surf until your eyes bleed. Note the sort of widgets that are fun, popular and have lots of positive comments and ratings.

Then write down some ideas to make your own. Many widgets can be made by you using a bit of HTML and javascript knowledge, but failing that OUTSOURCE. Go to a site like [Scriptlance](#) and submit a project, I assure you that you will get a ton of responses. Filter out the people who cannot type clearly in your own language, and those that paste the same ludicrous pitch into everything they go for. A simple widget using some php and javascript should cost you around \$50-\$100 including graphics (do them yourself or post a

separate project on Scriptlance, you can get some custom graphics for \$20-40.

If you don't have any cool ideas or inspiration, do not worry – just copy someone else's idea! Yes that's right, find a widget that is well rated, and that you think will spread well virally, and copy it but with your own twist and graphics.

Once your widget is built and created in Widgetbox, you can then spread it far and wide. Submit it to social bookmarking sites, write blog posts about it, and most importantly, spread it via Twitter, Facebook, Bebo and MySpace. In widgetbox you can create widgets for each site quickly, and then submit them to each sites widget directory, Once its approved, just grab some accounts and start promoting it. If it works they can spread like a bush fire.

One widget I created, a simple joke rating widget, has over 12,000 installs on Bebo alone and sends a 1000 people a day to one of my sites. On top of that, it is also on around 120 other sites, quite a few of who have also blogged about it, which is where you get links as well as traffic.

### ***TOP TIP:***

Widgets are placed on page using javascript. This means that links within them are invisible to the search engines. A way around this is to et a widget designed the uses an HTML wrapper, so that the link is hardcoded onto the page itself. Investigate this option if you really want to skyrocket the link you can get from a single widget.

### **Competitions, Quizzes & prize draws.**

Give something away, have a competition, swap points for prizes, the list is endless. Promote like crazy on sites and forums where people congregate to talk about free stuff. Spread the word and encourage people to spread it from their own sites and blogs, creating links to yours.

## **News “scoops”.**

It could be anything, just make sure that your mind is open to spotting when news breaks, so that you can react, and know where to publicise it.

One example of mine, is that I noticed that between shutting down my browser and then opening it a minute later, the dreaded Google PR bar had changed (it went up, yay, I am a success....).

I went to the Digitalpoint forum, and looked in the Google forum. Nobody else had spotted it and posted yet. I knew that in only a short time, people would notice and endless threads would break on forums everywhere.

So I threw together a blog post on my site blog in two minutes saying that I thought a Google PR update was in progress, pinged the hell out of it, submitted the RSS feed, I started threads on Digitalpoint and other large webmaster forums with a link to my blog and I bookmarked it to a ton of social sites in minutes using [Bookmarking Demon](#), all in the space of 10 minutes. I then spent a further 10 minutes on a mass blog commenting program, where I found over 1200 SEO-related blog posts, and posted a comment about the update in progress, each linking to my blog.

The net result was over 400 decent quality links to my site, many of which still exist today, all from 20 minutes work. The reason it worked was because, I was tuned into spotting an opportunity for linkbait, I reacted quickly, and I had tools and processes to make it realistic to achieve on the scale required to get it noticed.

*"Get there fastest with the mostest."*

- General Nathan Bedford Forest

## **Controversy/Shock.**

Hmm, not sure I should even share my attempt at this. It involved a Gorilla costume, a large plastic banana, a video camera and an embedded YouTube clip. It got me quite a few links from people writing about it in blog posts, but is not something I would do again!

## **Awards.**

Never done this one myself, and it would depend on spotting an opportunity in your sites niche. However, there are a ton of sites that offer medals, badges, plaques for “excellence”, and if you spot the opportunity there may be a ton of links and traffic in it for you.

## **Lists.**

They are everywhere, and you see them all the time, They also make probably the best linkbait, and are the easiest to create. “Top ten” lists are the most obvious example of this type of linkbait.

I created one in December 2008 called ten reasons to be happy in 2010, or something along those lines, spread it via social bookmarking, and got a ton of links to it.

The key is to be creative, funny and relevant to everyone, ie, make it universally accessible.

## **Humor.**

Make people laugh, do something silly, say something crazy, put up lists of jokes on a theme, just go mad with it.

Me? The last bit of humor linkbait was this. I made my pet cat the managing director of my limited company. I proposed a motion and had everything changed online, then I blogged about it, with a link to the company details and even added a photo of my cat sitting in a leather armchair to the post.

I then did a real press release saying that my cat had been mad the new MD of the company, and also spread it via my friends on facebook, bebo and myspace. The result? You guessed it, a ton of links.

So get inventive, think outside the box, and more than anything else, think about what would make someone say “what?! What on earth is this all about? I must tell someone....”. Classic linkbait.

### **Designs and graphics.**

My experience in this area, and the starting idea to get you thinking, is Wordpress themes. Go onto [Scriptlance](#) or [Elance](#) and surf around to see what sort of bids are being made on people asking for custom Wordpress theme creation. I have found you can get a decent theme from people who specialize in making them for less than \$100 including top quality graphics.

Make sure that in the footer.php they include a lovely anchor text link to a page of your choice, that is of course optimized for the links anchor text keyterm.

Then thank them for their work, pay them promptly, and throw that theme at everyone and anyone you can involved in Wordpress blogging.

Submit it to the Wordpress.org themes directory and to any other theme sites you can find. Find people who blog about Wordpress and offer it to them to give to their readers, find anyway you can to get your theme out there.

The more people who use it, the more people will like it and download it themselves, and every single one of them will be giving you a free one way backlink to your site. Even modestly successful themes can reach 1000 downloads, so ask yourself, is 1000 decent one way links worth \$100 to me?

*The answer is of course, yes.*

If you are even mildly competent, then it is not actually that tough to create your own theme for Wordpress in under an hour. Simply find yourself a “Private Label Rights” theme on [Google](#) and do some editing to the style.css, sidebar.php, header.php, page.php and footer.php.

Then go to a stock photo site such as [istockphoto](#) and get yourself a couple of images to replace the ones already in the theme (just resize them to the size of existing images, save as the same file name and upload to the images folder). That's pretty much it. Don't forget to add your anchor text links to the footer.php file though or it will all be pointless!

### **Research findings and statistical analysis.**

Have you ever done some number crunching or collected data when researching online? Well from now on when you are doing it, have in your mind that it could be valuable to other people as well.

People love facts and figures, lists and resources because it saves them time and helps to reassure them about the conclusions they have reached or helps them in forming their own opinion. So next time you research something, don't keep it to you yourself, spread the wealth and reap the rewards.

### **Content licensing.**

This is a strategy that is growing in popularity, and is used by a lot of the top SEO's out there. It is taking the publishing of data research to the next level in many ways.

An example of this would be data that can be pulled onto another site and generated using an API or similar. Obviously including a link back to your site.

For a great video on this subject, [click here](#).

One word of warning, be aware that licensing content you have on your site already could lead you into duplicate content issues.

Whatever linkbait you are aiming to create. Make sure it is well designed and that when you ask this question of it, the answer is always “yes”:

***Will this linkbait trigger an emotional reaction that will encourage someone to act on it?***

**TOP TIP:** Contacting site owners about your linkbait.

I do not mention elsewhere in The LinkBuilders Bible about contacting site owners to ask for links, as it is a complete waste of time usually. For every 100 emails you send, you might get 1 reply.

And why would someone reply? You are contacting them to ask for a link to your site and offering nothing in return! (Unless you ask to trade reciprocal links, but why would you waste your time doing that?).

However, if you have created linkbait you think other sites might benefit from, then yes, spend a few hours creating a nice email and send them to sites who you think might use the content, and therefore give you a one way link.

My top tip on this is to go into the DMOZ directory. It is still one of the top quality categorised directories out there. By visiting the categories of site you think would be interested, you are saving time on just doing keyword searches for related content sites.

Visit each site in the relevant DMOZ categories and look for the content they provide and evidence of outbound links. If you think they would be open to an approach, send them your beautifully crafted email. Make sure that if the site owners name is on the site that you use it in your email – it shows you are not some spammer.

# **Strategy: Finding Links By Searching For Footprints**

Footprints, what are they??

Well, in the same way as humans leave their tell-tale marks when we walk on soft ground, so websites leave their own footprints.

Every single piece of software used to make websites and forums has its own “tell tale” text strings that can be searched for on Google. A quick way of finding out what footprints a certain piece of software has is to visit its main site and view the live demo, the main site if it is a CMS (Content Management System, such as Wordpress, Joomla or Drupal), or the support forum if it is forum software.

Areas where footprints will be most evident are on the registration page and in the site footer.

As an example, have a look at the forum software “Simple Machines” community support forum by [clicking here](#). What do you see in the footer?

**“Powered by SMF 2.0 “**

That, Ladies and Gentlemen is a classic footprint. It is a single piece of text that is present on nearly every forum on the internet using Simple Machines 2.0 as its forum software. So you are probably ahead of me now, and heading off to Google right? Well you guessed it, you can find hundreds of these sites by searching for this phrase (use “phrase” around the words to search for the exact phrase) on Google.

There are hundreds of different pieces of software running millions of sites online, so you cannot exhaust this supply of sites with footprints to search for.

**TOP TIP:** Go to the community forum for the software you are researching and visit the “sticky” thread they always have in product support forums announcing new version releases. Scroll through the thread and write down each previous version number or name. Now you have a load of different terms you can search for, dramatically increasing the volumes of sites you can find using this powerful method.

So now you know how to find any type of website that uses a piece of software to generate its content, now you need to know how you can use this knowledge to build valuable one way backlinks.

The reason we are doing this is to find sites that allow people to join as members and create a profile page. It is within the profile page that we can place a link to our site. However, the sites need to fit certain criteria, which we will find out by following the process below.

### **Step 1.**

Get yourself a copy of Firefox. Then get the [NoDoFollow](#) and [SEO4Firefox](#) plugins and install them.

### **Step 2.**

Open your browser and switch on the plugins. For NoDofollow go to Tools > NoDoFollow, and for SEO4Firefox, click on the SEO icon at the bottom right hand side of the browser so it turns from greyed-out to full colour.

### **Step 3.**

Do a search for a footprint term.

### **Step 4.**

You are now going to visually filter out the results by using the PR

value displayed by SEO4Firefox. Yes I know I said PR is to be mostly disregarded from your decision making processes, but it is a quick-and-dirty visual way to filter out low or zero PR sites and forums. Although not foolproof, targeting high PR sites is more likely to lead to finding authoritative domains quick-and-dirty.

### **Step 5.**

When you spot a site with a high PR value page in the SERP, visit it. You now need to check for several things:

1. When you click on a members name/photo etc to view their profile page can you see it or does it tell you to login? If you can see the profile then bingo, if not, go back and search for another site.
2. Find a profile that contains an external link, to a homepage, blog, myspace page etc. If the link is “nofollow” then the NoDoFollow plugin will have highlighted it pink, otherwise it will be light purple if it is followed. If it is followed, bingo, if it is nofollowed, go back to your search.

### **Step 6.**

So now you are on a site that allows publically viewable profiles, which means a search engine spider can visit and index the page, and you have established that the link you build will be followed, you can create an account.

**TOP TIP:** Use [Roboform](#) to automate the process of completing all your forms online. It is cheap, and will cut the time you spend filling in forms by 90%.

### **Step 7.**

Once you have created and confirmed your account, note the site URL, then leave it alone for a WEEK. Why? New profiles arouse curiosity from admins and other members. If they visit and see that

your only input has been to drop a link on their site, then the chances are they will delete it. A blank profile says “I am coming back to complete this” and will probably be ignored. Take it one step further to maximise your chances by adding some nice “about me” text and a profile photo of a sweet middle-aged person.

### **Step 8.**

A week later, visit the URL, and add your links. The usual places are to enter a URL into the “homepage” field, and to place BB code or HTML code links into “about me” or “bio” or “signature” fields. You will learn with practise to know what each piece of software allows.

### **Step 9.**

Save the URL of your publically viewable profile page. Do this for each on you do, to create a list.

### **Step 10.**

Use the “How To” on quick indexing to get your new links found by the bots.

Now, that sounds like a lot of work for a link, and it is. However, what you needed to learn here was the manual process and the reasons for doing each bit. Now you have the knowledge, you can automate things to speed them up. There are lots of ways to do this, and they are out there if you want to harvest these link locations, but if you do, I suppose, have to weigh up if the work is worth the effort when several providers do that research for you.

## **Another Example – find blogs to comment on.**

How about some other footprints you can search for to find places to place links? Fancy doing blog commenting?

Ok, how about taking a look at this image from a wordpress blog:



The image shows a 'Leave a Reply' form with the following fields and elements:

- Leave a Reply** (Section Header)
- Name (required)
- E-mail (will not be published) (required)
- Website
- 
- 
- Notify me of follow-up comments via email.

A large green arrow points to the checkbox labeled 'Notify me of follow-up comments via email.'.

The big green arrow is a clue. Try a search for that phrase in quotes:

***“Notify me of follow-up comments via email” +keyword***

Now turn on your NoDoFollow Firefox plugin, and go surfing. You just found a way to identify literally thousands of relevant blogs to comment on, and of course add a your URL in the “website” field.

**TOP TIP:** Continually find new sites with footprints.

Using the knowledge you have learnt about finding footprints, set-up some Google alerts, one for each footprint term.

Now when Google finds new content with that footprint, you will be the first to know and act.

## Fancy doing some guest blogging?

No problem, lets use our footprints knowledge to find sites we might be able to contact to offer our services.

Fire up Google and do some searches for these phrases:

“guest post”

“guest article”

“become a contributor”

“contribute to this site”

“write for us”

add a keyword after the phrase and you can then narrow things down even further.

So there you have it, the secret of how you can sniff out high-quality links on authority sites. Don't limit yourself to searching for just software footprints however. Remember, there are loads of terms to look for that can point to opportunities to place links:

- “Add Link”
- “Add URL”
- “Website URL:”
- “Submit Site”
- “Submit URL”

- “register.php”
- “Create User”
- 

You can also mix it up to find multiple terms, for example:

site:.edu "wordpress"

Don't forget Wiki's! There are thousands of them, most using the same piece of software to generate them, some pass PageRanks and most are far from moderated. Try to add some value though please.

You get the picture. Now go forth and sniff out those high-powered, and totally free link opportunities!

## **HOW TO: Get A Powerful Link From Facebook**

If you have read enough forums you will be under the impression that you cannot get a followed link from Facebook, one of the most powerful, authoritative domains on the internet.

Well, hand onto your pants, I am about to tell you that you can get a followed anchor text link from Facebook!

How? Well, there are several methods, but rather than spill all the beans here (hunting and discovering is part of the fun of succeeding), I will reveal one method here, and assure you that there are at least 3 other ways (and maybe more) to get these powerful links elsewhere on Facebook.

The URL you need is:

<http://forum.developers.facebook.com/>

As you can see, it is a subdomain of the main Facebook domain. Do not let that fool you though, it's PageRank for the main URL above is **NINE**. Now as you know I do not pay too much attention to PR, however, nobody can deny that any site that reaches PR9 ( the Google homepage is a PR9) then it must be pretty powerful.

When you visit it, you will also notice the footer having learnt about how to find footprints:

"Powered by PunBB"

This is a classic example of what you can find if you dig around enough!

Simply sign-up for an account, wait a week, than drop your link quietly in the profile area. In Pun BB the website URL field is linked to a website name field. Completing both these will give you an anchor text, followed, one way backlink to your site from one of the most powerful websites on the planet.

Don't forget to submit the profile URL to those bookmarklets!

## **DIRTY TRICK #1**

How to get loads of links from posting a single blog comment.

Although multiple links from one domain will be discounted, there is a chance they are not ignored completely. So this trick could be worth an hour of your time!

There is a plugin for Wordpress called the Global Translator Plugin. What it does is it uses several translation engines to translate your blog posts into up to 41 different languages.

The vital point here is that every time content is added to a page or post, the translator kicks in and starts translating it when the page is next requested, creating an updated page with new content on it. It creates the translated content in completely fresh folders, in effect creating mirrors of the original blog in different languages. So simply by commenting on a blog where this translator plugin is working, your single comment can actually become up to 41 comments, each being a link back to your site!

And it gets even better. Blogs are targeted in their thousands by people who “scrape” or “harvest” the content, post, comments and all, and place that content onto their own blogs, known as spam blogs, or splogs. So if that blog is picked up and dumped onto another blog, you get another backlink, and you are maximising your chances of this happening as your comment is on a blog that is being translated into up to 41 languages!

Yes these are very low level links, but sometimes that could be enough to make the difference. I strongly recommend that if you use this strategy, that you only use it to “power up” your generated content links.

So how do you find the blogs using this plugin? Footprints of course! Simply search on Google for “By N2H” and you will find sites using the “nothing2Hide” global translator plugin.

## ***Links To Avoid.***

Not every link you can get is worth having, and some links can actually harm your rankings by earning you a penalty from the search engines.

Google states the following in its [Webmaster Guidelines](#):

*Don't participate in link schemes designed to increase your site's ranking or PageRank. In particular, avoid links to web spammers or "bad neighborhoods" on the web, as your own ranking may be affected adversely by those links.*

*Keep the links on a given page to a reasonable number (fewer than 100).*

*Your site's ranking in Google search results is partly based on analysis of those sites that link to you. The quantity, quality, and relevance of links count towards your rating. The sites that link to you can provide context about the subject matter of your site, and can indicate its quality and popularity. However, some webmasters engage in link exchange schemes and build partner pages exclusively for the sake of cross-linking, disregarding the quality of the links, the sources, and the long-term impact it will have on their sites. This is in violation of Google's webmaster guidelines and can negatively impact your site's ranking in search results. Examples of link schemes can include:*

- Links intended to manipulate PageRank
- Links to web spammers or bad neighborhoods on the web
- Excessive reciprocal links or excessive link exchanging ("Link to me and I'll link to you.")
- Buying or selling links that pass PageRank

There is an element of risk in any links you build yourself. However, with knowledge you can quickly determine the real risk involved. For example, I advocate in in this guide using a website called [IBL Builder](#) to build one way links. Yes it is manipulating link growth, but its risk factor is very low. Why? Because it is an enclosed network that is not publically viewable, and also using it leaves no footprints on member sites.

Compare this with the truly automated link building schemes out there. With these, you paste some code into your site and then links are allocated out to all members without their intervention to give everyone in the network increasing numbers of one way links.

Most of these services leave a “footprint” on your site in some way, and should the search engine choose to find the sites using the network it could. So it is about being informed and weighing up degrees of risk in the real world.

Another type of link I recommend avoiding are “sitewide” links. These are usually links within the “blogroll” or links section of a blog. What this means is that your link appears on every single page generated by the site. This is not an issue for a small blog, but if your same anchor text link is appearing on hundreds and hundreds of pages of a single blog, how do you think Google will see it?

I also do not really recommend bothering with reciprocal (two-way) links as generally these are less valuable links. This includes things like using trackbacks on blogs. My view is that it takes just as long to form a reciprocal link, if not longer as two parties have to agree, so why bother? The only exception to this is if the reciprocal link is on a page that can send you significant traffic, or is a powerful page in its own right.

## **DIRTY TRICK #2**

Get links from sites selling software.

On your travels around the net you will have at some stage probably searched for a piece of software. There are millions of tools and utilities out there that do not warrant a site of their own, especially if they are free. So the developer will place them on a software directory site.

Do searches for “freeware”, “shareware”, “free software” and other similar terms and you will uncover literally thousands of these sites.

What makes it interesting is that many of these sites do not monitor listings being added to their sites, and if they do, they just give it a quick check to make sure the link points to a file or URL with a file link on it.

No software? No problem. Just get a piece of shareware from one of those directories that has a “creative commons” license that allows redistribution.

Rename the file and place the link in a little box on your site, and write about how you recommend it.

Now you can go and get some lovely deep-links for your site. Visit all the software directories you can find and once you have used the NoDoFollow plugin to check for followed links, fill in the submission forms. Make sure you link to your webpage, NOT the file itself.

That's it! A lot will be approved because there is software on the target page, and others will be automatically approved anyway. Nearly all the links will be URL, rather than anchor text links, but hey 90% of the time they will be followed.

## Co-Citation.

OMG What?? Do not worry, you are not alone, virtually nobody know about the potential implications of this.

Co-citation is related to the “neighbourhood” your site is in. You want to be in the right neighbourhood so people find you for all the right search terms right?

Co-citation can occur where one page links out to other pages with unrelated content, i.e. it co-citates more than one topic within a single page.

So lets say you placed a link on another website that links to you, and next to your link on that page are a load of Playstation gaming links.

Suddenly the search engine is following all those links and starts to think that your site is related to playstation consoles – when its not.

It is really easy to check if your site is suffering from some off-topic co-citation effects. Simply search for your site and click on the “similar” link.

[Website Hosting - Mysite.com](#)

For affordable website hosting packages, go to **MySite.com**. You'll find complete and reliable website hosting with a range of prices and options.

[www.mysite.com/](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)



If you start finding unrelated stuff in there, you can begin to piece together how you have become related to these sites. Rectifying it is simply a matter of refocusing on what sort of other links appear on the pages your links are on.

In the main however, co-citation seems to be pretty well handled, otherwise a lot of sites would suddenly start being associated with all sorts of unrelated stuff. However, repetitively placing links with

others from the same unrelated subject could, over time, make you start to rank well for some weird stuff.

As a final point, co-citation is a good example of the power of link anchor text, and how it can dramatically effect your rankings.

### **DIRTY TRICK #3**

Get one way links from reciprocal link exchanges.

Reciprocal link exchange sites are a throw back to the days when reciprocal links were valuable, and when you could put up a “links page” agree hundreds of reciprocal links and benefit from it. Nowadays you could get a search engine penalty for doing what was accepted five years ago.

There are still reciprocal link exchange sites about, or dinosaurs as I call them. The biggest site, is linkmarket.net. It still ranks well because it has tens of thousands of links to it, is an old established domain etc, etc. It also draws in hundreds of new members each week, purely because it ranks highly for the key search terms.

Poor, unsuspecting innocents, who have a site but don't have a clue, read something about “link exchange” and search for it. The first site that comes up is linkmarket.net so they join it. They are totally unaware that “one way links” even exist, or think that linkbuilding etc is just exchanging links.

So despite it being a dinosaur, linkmarket is a place with tens of thousands of people who would love to give you a link in exchange for one back.

Remember how we want to “power-up” our generated content, and also use it as a firewall to insulate our site from harm? Well this dirty trick uses those generated content sites.

Submit them all to linkmarket, each in a different account. Select 5

sites each day that you find with decent quality and PageRank on their linking page. Send them an offer.

Each day you will also get a ton of incoming requests. Sift through them and accept any from decent pages.

Once you both agree, you simply paste their links into a page on your generated sites. Linkmarket confirms you have both done it, and then everyone forgets about them. Build up about 20 reciprocal links for each account.

Then leave them a month.

A month later, visit each generated content site and simply delete the page you put all the links on. Linkmarket will delete your account and tell the other site to remove the link to your site, but in my experience more than 75% of them never bother.

So you build 100% worthless reciprocal links, wait a month and then turn them into valuable one way backlinks by simply deleting a page.

A dirty trick, and certainly not for everyone, but incredibly powerful if your “gloves are off”.

## **Strategy: Article Directories.**

Article generation and submission is another form of generated content that you should consider using.

An article accepted onto a quality article site can produce a relevant content link to your site, and additional traffic benefits. Not only will you gain traffic from visitors to the article directory, but fresh pages on quality sites are found and indexed quickly.

One thing I would say is that I feel a lot of people who use article submissions, either as a linkbuilding strategy, or for marketing purposes are focusing on the wrong strategy. The focus seems to be on generating more and more and more articles all the time, and rarely focussing on improving the rankings of the the articles they already have.

Visit a site like [ezine articles](#) and take a look at the average view counts for most articles. They are LOW LOW LOW! So they are evidently getting no traffic internally, and rarely rank well enough in the SERP's on their own to bring in traffic themselves. And how long can you keep churning out articles of any quality so they get authorised?

Surely the focus should be on generating small numbers of excellent quality articles, and then building their URL's into your linkbuilding campaigns? Make them part of your "firewall", and build their own SERP positions at the same time. That way they not only produce a decent quality link, but they can then use the advantages of being on a respected domain and being powered up by links to generate their own traffic.

I would certainly rather spend my time building up links to a few articles that give me a powerful links and that people may read, than continually generating articles and trying to get them authorised?

**TOP TIP:** Google Knoll

This is Google's attempt at Wikipedia. User-submitted resources on any subject you like, so a sort of article directory.

All you need to know are that links in articles are followed, anchor text ones...

<http://knol.google.com/>

## **HOW TO: Rapidly Build Profile Links**

We have already briefly talked about what a profile link is. We have also covered how you uncover the footprints that can lead to sites that will allow you to build those links. It can be time-consuming though, and most people who use this strategy will just buy a list of link locations from a provider for a small sum each week/month, and then use software to automate the process as much as possible.

There are a few of people selling these packets of links (basically lists of sites that fit the criteria we have already outlined in the section on footprints). and a quick search on forums such as the [Warrior forum](#) will quickly uncover a selection of providers.

You could try the LinkPacks sold by [24hourlinks.com](#). Most of the providers packets are over-subscribed, sometimes with literally hundreds of people using them. This means that the website owners quickly spot hundreds of new accounts being created and do something about it, meaning less of your links stay in place. As the 24hourlinks packets are restricted to just 50 sales per copy, the chance of a link remaining in place is greatly increased.

Step two is to buy the SEO Link Dominator software that is especially designed to manage the building of profile links by [clicking here](#).

You simply load your newly purchased packet of links into the software and then follow the steps to automate the creating of accounts. Follow the instructions given in the link packet to minimise your chance of discovery, and place your links. The software even creates and submits RSS feeds of your profile link URL's for you, to help ensure they get indexed quickly.

## **Automation.**

There are many ways to automate your linkbuilding using software. I have outlined a semi-automatic solution for profile link building in this guide. However, you can fully automate and blast out thousand of Class 1 links, or create hundreds of Web 2.0 properties using software solutions.

I am not outlining their use in detail in The LinkBuilders Bible however, because they come with a massive warning label attached and detailing their use safely would be a 100-page guide in itself! Misuse of these types of program can get your site fully banned from the SERP's very quickly. On top of that, website owners can often spot this spam link building and do not hesitate to report it to the users internet service provider (ISP), or to their webhost or domain registrar.

Godaddy for example have been known to suspend ALL of an accounts domains on receiving spam complaints to just ONE of the domains in an account. So getting this wrong could result in all of your sites going down instantly if you use Godaddy to register domains.

There are programs out there, such as Xrumer, SENuke and Scrapebox that will churn out thousands of blog comments, forum posts and Web 2.0 sites each day. But I strongly advise caution and obtaining informational expertise before using them. As well as getting you banned, you are spamming other people on a huge scale.

Remember *Link Velocity*? Well as soon as you start down the road of mass-producing thousands of links, you have to keep on doing it. So it gets progressively more risky as the stakes rise.

***This is not a strategy for long term success unless you know exactly what you are doing and can sustain it.***

**TOP TIP:** Use [IBL Builder](#) to build links.

IBL Builder is a link exchange site. But it is not one of those hideous reciprocal dinosaurs. It works in exactly the same way, but they have cleverly placed a credit system in between the steps, to make it possible to build non-reciprocal links with other people.

What??

Basically, every time you offer a link from your site through the directory you earn a credit. So the more links you offer from pages on your site, the more credits you build up. You then spend a credit requesting a link from a site you choose in their directory.

It is therefore a beautifully quick and simple way to get hold of one way backlinks by the ton! There is even an automated option which means that once you agree a link from your site, it appears automatically on your webpage through an uploaded piece of code you place on the webpage. The code leaves not footprint, so nobody knows you are using IBL Builder.

So get in there, add your site, offer out links and then request a load with your credits. There are apparently 2000 sites in there waiting for your requests!

## LinkWheels.

The LinkWheel is a concept invented by [this guy](#). His theory was that WEB 2.0 sites were favoured by the search engines and therefore were given more “powerful” links. By creating a “wheel of links” that interlocked, the power of the links were passed along the line, building, I assume, some sort of momentum and increasing the chances of being found and indexed.

This is a diagram of the concept:



As you can see, each generated content site links both to the hub site, and to the next “spoke” in the wheel.

My personal findings suggest that there is little benefit to spending extra time linking to each “poke” to create this structure. Web 2.0 properties are far less valued now as they have become a haven for the user generated sites we have described earlier.

I would go as far as to say that linkwheels are potentially dangerous for your site in some cases, especially if you are doing it on a large scale and using a lot of sites all linking to form a large linkwheel. Why? Because if the search engine finds one part of your

linkwheel, it can then easily find the rest by following the links. It will also be made 100% clear it is a linkwheel when the last site is found linking back to the first.

In addition, how will you get these user generated sites out of Google's supplemental index? The only way it to build links to each "spoke", which means if the linkwheel is found, you stand to lose even more than just the generated content sites.

Some people swear they work, I have seen little evidence it does. Many respected sources have analysed linkwheels in great detail, and report that if you can gain value, if you harness the power of a few of the more trusted web 2.0 properties and then power-up those properties. This obviously increases the work as those more trusted sources, such as HubPages and Squidoo, are generally better policed and so the quality of your work needs to be high to keep those properties alive.

So my advice is to try them out if you are ready to invest considerable time getting this strategy spot-on, and at all times track what effects it is having on your site.

# **HOW TO: Build Links Through RSS.**

Something that is not mentioned very much is that you can utilise RSS to build links to your site from RSS directories. Low value links maybe, but lots of them and quickly.

First of all, you need to get the RSS feed URL for your site. If you use Wordpress, or a hosted option such as Squidoo, this should be instantly findable by clicking on the RSS icon or link on your site. If your site is static HTML, you can create a feed using [html2rss.com](http://html2rss.com), which is free and easy to use.

Next you need to visit [feedburner](http://feedburner.com) and create an account and add a feed. Make sure that you name the feed as “my great keywords/terms here” rather than a non-keyterm description like “my blog feed”.

You can then (if you use non-hosted Wordpress) also download the Feedburner [Feedsmith plugin](#), and use it to manage redirection to your feedburner feed.

Now submit your RSS feeds to as many RSS services as possible (there is a list of 50 in the resources section). Each successful submission creates a link to your site.

**TOP TIP:** Get links from people stealing your content!

If you have a great site that you update a lot with good content, and you use a non-hosted Wordpress site, then the chances are good that someone is “scraping” your content. This usually means they are using a Wordpress plugin to pull your RSS feed onto their own blog.

This creates instant free content for them, and a headache for you. Suddenly your content is working against you and in some cases it will be your content that is seen as the duplicate by Google and be ignored.

However, one way to turn thing to your advantage is to install the [Yoast RSS Footer plugin](#).

This plugin allows you to simply place a link to your site into the RSS feed, so that the content they scrape onto their own blogs will display a link to your site.

## ***Track Your Link Growth.***

So you spend an hour a day using everything you have learnt to build links. But how do you know if the links are actually still there, working for your site, and that your rankings are improving as a result of your efforts?

The first thing you should do is to track your current position in the SERP's. A handy site that can help you do this is:

<http://www.build-reciprocal-links.com/multiple-keyword-se-position/>

Simply complete the form with multiple keywords and your main domain URL, and it will go off and search Google.com and tell you what position you rank in for each term and what URL from your site

is ranking. Do this weekly, and track your progress using a spreadsheet. Just write the keywords down the first column of the spreadsheet, and add a fresh column each week with the current position numbers in it. In seconds you can then convert that to a graph that will visually show you if your site is growing in power as you build your links.

If you don't have Microsoft Office, you can get the completely FREE office software suite [Open Office here](#). It is a truly amazing piece of free software, and contains a spreadsheet program just as powerful as Excel for basic work.

If you would like to know when Google finds a link to your site, then you can use [Google alerts](#). This is a great little free tool from the people you are trying to outsmart! Just set-up an alert with each anchor text term you are using in your linkbuilding, and also one for your main site name. Every time Google indexes something containing the terms you entered, it will email you. This is great for tracking what Google has found, and therefore what it has not found, allowing you to focus on quick indexing techniques where needed.

### ***How do I find out what links are pointing at my site?***

To view the links to your site, you can use Yahoo Explorer:

1. Visit <http://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com>
2. Enter your main URL and click "explore URL".
3. Click the "inlinks" button.
4. Use the drop down to select "except from this domain" to filter out your internal links.
5. Select "entire site" from the second dropdown to show all inbound links relating to your main URL.

One thing to note is that in yahoo Explorer you can only see the first 1000 inbound links. If you decide to use [IBL Builder](#) for some of

your linkbuilding, then the Yahoo Explorer data is viewable on demand simply by clicking a link in your account.

You can also use [backlinkwatch.com](http://backlinkwatch.com) to view your backlinks. The only downside is that this site is very popular and it can be incredibly slow at times.. the PR column also very rarely actually seems to display any results.

Your inbound links can also be viewed in [Google Webmaster Tool](#) accounts, so make sure you sign-up for one as it is completely free and may even help with the speed of indexing your new content.

It is important to note that none of the services I have mentioned can display all the links you have, so you will never get a 100% accurate figure. Don't agonise over this, just keep building more links. Patience is a virtue in linkbuilding, and you must be prepared for really positive results to take 3-6 months to appear.

A more accurate way of analysing your ranking that I personally use is [Rank Checker](#) (free version download).

## **DIRTY TRICK #4**

### Placing hidden links on forums.

There are many forums/sites out there that have followed links, but that do not allow hyperlinks in signatures, links within posts or allow profiles but will delete those with spammy links in them.

One way around this is to turn smileys into hyperlinks. It really is that simple, and very difficult for admins to spot.

Simply reply to a post, and finish with a smiley. Or add a smiley at the end of a block of text in a profile.

Then highlight it, click the link button, enter your URL and post your reply. One normal post with hidden link to your site.

### ***Want to take it a step further?***

OK, if the forum/site allows you to switch between WYSIWYG and HTML view in the text editor, go into HTML view and add an ALT attribute to the image:

```

```

There is plenty of evidence out there that a well optimised keyword ALT tag can pass on relevance to the target page in the same way as anchor text can from a normal link. So it's worth spending a few seconds doing this extra step.

# ***Spy On Your Competition!***

***(Otherwise known as Competitor Analysis...)***

In the same way that you can monitor your own inbound link growth, you can turn the same techniques to doing analysis of your competitors strategies.

*"You can observe a lot just by watching".*

-Yogi Berra

Do a search on Google for one of the keyword search terms you are targeting, pick the 5 sites who are ranking directly ahead of you as a starting test.

For each one, enter their URL's into whatever site you are using, Yahoo Explorer for example, and then analyse the the results. From the results you can build up a picture of the following key points:

- Assess how difficult they will be to overtake
- Find any mass/automated/trick techniques
- Uncover their relationships with other sites
- The level of the public relations activity

Some are easier to spot than others. For example, a high number of links from press release and news sites would point to a well developed PR strategy you can copy.

You can also quickly spot their relationships. It is often surprising how you can find a competitors other sites using this technique, and the sites of their close friends etc.

At all times look for linkbuilding opportunities. There may be relevant niche directories that you were not aware of for example. If

they have a standard listing, go one better and pay a bit of cash to get a better link in the directory. Do not just mimick your competitors linkbuilding, enhance what they have done wherever possible to gain more linking power than they achieved.

Also consider, what they did to obtain each link and write it down. You will find you start to think between the lines and expand on what they did. This can give you a killer advantage in finding linking strategies your competitors have not considered.

A great free website that really hits the spot is <http://www.linkdiagnosis.com> – enter any URL into it will serve you up a wonderfully comprehensive set of stats.

**TOP TIP:** Study Their Visitor Stats

Many sites have publically viewable visitor statistics, usually viewable through links in the page footer to sites such as SiteMeter, HiStats and StatsCounter. These visitors are coming from search engines or referrals. Visit the referring sites if they are listed. Why did they send that traffic? Is there a link? Can you get one as well? Could you do something for this site that is better, and thereby replace the competitors link?

If it is a blog, find out if it is listed on [blogtoplist.com](http://blogtoplist.com). If it is you can get detailed visitor stats there.

If you would like to automate the process of analysis more, I strongly recommend investing in a copy of [SEO SpyGlass](#) (free version available).

# ***RESOURCE 1: Reputable Directories Everyone Should Be In.***

<http://directory.v7n.com/>

<http://dmoz.org>

<http://botw.org>

<http://dir.yahoo.com/>

<http://lii.org/>

<http://www.freeindex.com/>

<http://www.freeindex.co.uk/>

<http://joeant.com/>

<http://www.stpt.com/>

<http://goguides.org>

# ***RESOURCE 2: Influential Sites You Should Follow.***

<http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/>

<http://www.seomoz.org/blog>

<http://www.stonetemple.com/blog/>

<http://www.seroundtable.com/>

<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.bing.com/community/blogs/search/>

<http://www.marketingpilgrim.com/>

<http://www.searchenginejournal.com/>

<http://www.seobook.com/>

# RESOURCE 3: RSS Directory

## List.

<http://www.feedest.com/feedAdd.cfm>  
<http://www.blogoculars.com/add-blog>  
<http://www.2rss.com/>  
<http://www.feedmil.com/addfeed.jsp>  
<http://rss001.com/create-content/add-feed>  
<http://www.rssaround.com/submit.php>  
<http://www.blogbal.com/submit.php>  
<http://www.feedbees.com/add.php>  
<http://www.feedshoster.com/addfeed.html?catid=>  
<http://www.plazoo.com/en/addrss.asp>  
<http://www.feedooyoo.com/ref.htm>  
<http://www.rssmicro.com/feedssubmit.web>  
<http://feedfury.com/submit>  
[http://www.octora.com/add\\_rss.php](http://www.octora.com/add_rss.php)  
[http://www.rssmountain.com/submit\\_anonym.php](http://www.rssmountain.com/submit_anonym.php)  
<http://www.findrss.net/catalogs/rsscatalog.nsf/submit?openForm>  
<http://www.feedbase.net/Add.php>  
[http://www.rssmotron.com/feed\\_submission.php](http://www.rssmotron.com/feed_submission.php)  
<http://www.morenews.be/voegbrontoe.php>  
<http://www.daytimenews.com/submit-rss-feed.aspx>  
[http://rss-feeds-submission.com/RSS/I\\_op=Addrss.html](http://rss-feeds-submission.com/RSS/I_op=Addrss.html)  
<http://www.millionrss.com/add-my-feed.php>  
[http://publisher.yahoo.com/rss\\_guide/submit.php](http://publisher.yahoo.com/rss_guide/submit.php)  
<http://www.readablog.com/AddFeed.aspx>  
<http://www.goldenfeed.com/AddFeed.aspx>  
<http://www.blogdigger.com/add.jsp>  
<http://api.moreover.com/RPC2>  
<http://blog.goo.ne.jp/XMLRPC>  
<http://blogsearch.google.com/ping/RPC2>  
<http://ping.bitacoras.com>  
<http://ping.blo.gs/>  
<http://ping.feedburner.com>  
<http://ping.syndic8.com/xmlrpc.php>  
<http://ping.weblogalot.com/rpc.php>  
<http://rpc.blogbuzzmachine.com/RPC2>  
<http://rpc.blogcatalog.com/>  
<http://rpc.blogrolling.com>  
<http://api.moreover.com/RPC2>  
<http://blogsearch.google.com/ping/RPC2>  
<http://ping.weblogalot.com/rpc.php>  
<http://ping.feedburner.com>  
<http://ping.syndic8.com/xmlrpc.php>  
<http://ping.bloggers.jp/rpc/>  
<http://rpc.pingomatic.com/>  
<http://rpc.weblogs.com/RPC2>  
<http://rpc.technorati.com/rpc/ping>  
<http://www.blogpeople.net/servlet/weblogUpdates>  
<http://xping.pubsub.com/ping>  
<http://rpc.icerocket.com:10080/>  
<http://rpc.pingomatic.com/>  
<http://rpc.technorati.com/rpc/ping>  
<http://www.feedster.com/>  
<http://rpc.weblogs.com/RPC2>  
<http://www.blogpeople.net/servlet/weblogUpdates>  
<http://www.wasalive.com/ping/>  
<http://88tem.com/submit-feed>  
<http://www.weblogalot.com/Ping/>  
<http://www.feedboy.com/addfeed.html?catid=>  
<http://chordata.info/suggest.php>  
<http://blogpulse.com/submit.html>  
<http://www.daypop.com/info/submit.htm>  
<http://www.rss-network.com/submitrss.php>  
[http://www.jordomedia.com/RSS/I\\_op=Addrss.html](http://www.jordomedia.com/RSS/I_op=Addrss.html)  
<http://feeds2read.net/Suggest-A-Feed>  
<http://www.feedcycle.com/about/start.php>  
<http://feedshark.brainbliss.com/>

# **RESOURCE 4: Social Bookmarking & News Sites.**

<http://reddit.com/>  
<http://digg.com/>  
<http://www.propeller.com/>  
<http://fark.com/>  
<http://slashdot.org/>  
<http://www.metafilter.com/>  
<http://www.mixx.com/>  
<http://www.shoutwire.com/>  
<http://www.newsvine.com/>  
<http://linkfilter.net/>  
<http://delicious.com/>  
<http://stumbleupon.com>  
<http://www.plime.com/>  
<http://www.care2.com/>  
<http://stirrdup.com/>  
<http://sphinn.com/>  
<http://www.dzone.com/>  
<http://tweako.com/>  
<http://www.designfloat.com/>  
<http://www.plugin.com/>  
<http://www.smallbusinessbrief.com/>  
<http://links.hubspot.com/>  
<http://tipd.com/>  
<http://bookmarks.yahoo.com>

The above are some of the main one's and a few useful niche bookmarking sites. For a massive list of hundreds try this site:

<http://www.social-bookmarking-sites-list.com/>

Ping Services:

<http://pingoat.com/>  
<http://pingomatic.com>

# **RESOURCE 5: Web 2.0 Site & Blog Builders.**

<http://blogsme.com>

<http://weebly.com>

<http://wordpress.com>

<http://blogger.com>

<http://livejournal.com>

<http://www.livelog.com/>

<http://theblogs.net/>

<http://www.thoughts.com/>

<http://www.webnode.com/>

<http://www.blog.co.uk/>

<http://www.freeblog.org.uk/>

<http://www.bravenet.com/webtools/journal/>

<http://www.yola.com/>

<http://www.webs.com/>

<http://bloguni.com/>

<http://www.sosblog.com/>

<http://www.wix.com/>

<http://doodlekit.com>

<http://www.vox.com/>

<http://www.tumblr.com/>

<http://blogskinny.com/>

<http://www.blogeasy.com/>

<http://www.blogr.com/>