

Mike Filsaime Presents...



To the uninitiated, the concept of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) carries an air of secrecy, complexity, and even a touch of mysticism. It's true that keeping up with the latest developments and challenges can be tricky and time-consuming, but the basics are surprisingly simple. And the payoff, in terms of traffic and credibility, are immense. One of the fastest ways to be considered a notable player, in any niche, is to grab a

first page ranking for a relevant search term.

At the very, very, least, you should aim to get a top three ranking for your own name (or business name). You don't want the embarrassment of a potential client searching for you on *Google*, but struggling to find your website.

This month we've picked the brains of the people that perform SEO, not just for themselves, but for their paying clients. You'll learn the well-established techniques, the latest strategies, how to rank quickly, how to build more incoming links, and – if you don't fancy tackling the work yourself – how to effectively outsource your SEO. Even if you think you're already pretty savvy in these areas, I'm confident you'll find some valuable tips over the next few pages.

Enjoy the November 2011 issue of MDC, and I'll see you next month!

Mike Filsaime

SEO QUESTIONS



... ANSWERED

by melbourneSEOservices.com

What are the 2011 Best Practices for Link Building?

Imagine for a second that you're *Google* and you can see the trillions of webpages that are out there. The people who are trying to optimize their sites to receive good search rankings are in the minority, so it won't be difficult to identify patterns and expectations about how the average site "naturally" develops.

This is why, when you're building incoming links to your site, you want to do so in a way that appears as "natural" as possible. This means:

- **Dividing the destination of your incoming links between home and inner pages.**
- **Obtaining links with a variety of different anchor texts.**
- **Obtaining links from different sources.**
- **Having links that are both "no follow" and "do follow."**

Think about it. What "natural" site would only have links sent to the homepage, all using the exact same anchor text, and all from *WordPress* blog comments that don't use the "no follow" tag?

1) Link Sources

Creating a healthy mixture of link sources is key to increasing your rankings and protecting your site from algorithm changes. Think of it like diversification in your investment portfolio. The following are all great sources for links:

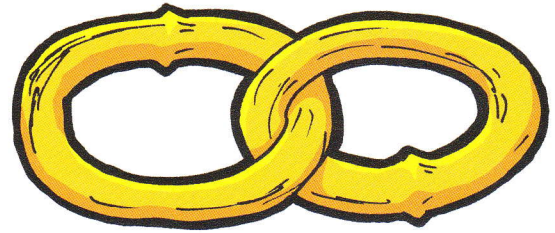
- **Directories:** These are still viable for link building. They often take a while to get approved, so the links come in over a longer span of time instead of all at once. They also often link to your site using your URL which is good for anchor text diversification.

- **Article Directories:** While some sites that built their entire link portfolios on article directories have lost rankings in recent algorithm changes, sites like *EzineArticles* are still great sources for links.

- **Blog Networks:** There are lots of these around but two of the most popular are *Article Marketing Automation* and *Unique Article Wizard*. They give you access to a large network of blogs that are willing to post your article in exchange for linking back to your site. They get content and you get the backlinks.

- **Web 2.0 Sites:** Sites like *Wordpress.com* (the hosted blogging site, not the software), *Blogger*, *Tumblr*, *Squidoo*, and *Hubpages* all allow you to create your own mini-sites where you can control the content and links.

- **Blog Guest Posts:** Finding popular blogs and websites in your niche and offering to give them free content is a great way



to get backlinks, increase traffic, and also reinforce your standing in the community as an authority.

- **Your Own Site Network:** There is a lot of mileage to be had in creating a network of your own sites and using them to point back to a main "money site." Please note, however, that *Google* considers the variation in IP addresses with incoming links. Be careful not to have all of your sites on the same server or your links will all come from the same IP and a red flag could be raised.

2) No Follow Links

Many people who attempt to do SEO don't like getting links from sites that have attached the "no follow" attribute to their outgoing links. The belief is that they are worthless because they pass no "link juice" or value along.

Although there is some debate about whether or not "no follow" links pass anything along, they should not be ignored. Remember, it's important to have a "natural" looking site and having absolutely zero "no follow" links will look strange.

What are the Best SEO Tools?

There are more SEO tools out there than you can count; sometimes it's hard to sort through them all and find the ones that will provide real value. Here are the ones you need to keep your eye on.

Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics)
Install a little bit of code on your site and *Google Analytics* will allow you to break down your site traffic in a thousand ways and get almost any information you need. This tool is free and helps you to see where your traffic is coming from, how it got there, how long it stayed, what it did while it was there, and so on. Intimately understanding this tool is vital if you want to succeed with SEO.

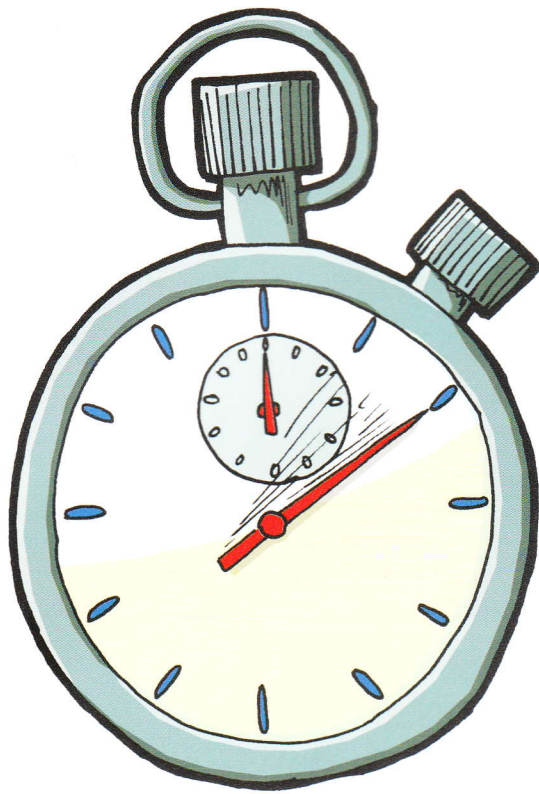
Market Samurai (www.marketsamurai.com)
Market Samurai is one of the market leaders

when it comes to keyword and competition research. It's a powerful tool that allows you to get an in-depth understanding of a potential market before you jump into it. Because keyword selection is the most important part of SEO, this tool is crucial. It's available for a one-time fee, rather than a recurring monthly subscription, which is always a bonus.

Raven Tools (www.raventools.com)
Raven Tools is a suite of SEO tools all available in one convenient location. It incorporates many popular tools like *Open Site Explorer*, *Majestic SEO*, *SEM Rush*, and others at a fraction of the price of purchasing them all separately. If you're serious about SEO, own a lot of sites, or are thinking

about becoming a professional in this field, it's a must have.





Is It Possible to Rank Quickly?

Absolutely. The following techniques have worked for years and I see no reason why they shouldn't work for years to come.

1) Long Tail Keywords

Long tail keywords are specific phrases made up of three or more keywords. For example, if you have a site about the *Sony Handycam*, long tail keywords would be specific model numbers such as "*Sony Handycam HDR-S11*." Not only are long tail keywords easier and faster to rank for, but people inputting specific terms like this are usually more on the buying side of the decision making process.

Individually these terms don't produce as much traffic, but you can build up an extensive list of them. Additionally, as your site gains traction, ranking for more competitive terms will become easier.

2) Build a Big Site

John Reese once commented that you're buying "more tickets in the search engine lottery" with a larger site. Simply put, larger sites provide more opportunities for you to rank. This is one of the reasons why ecommerce sites often do well in the search engine rankings. They're simply casting a wider net to catch more fish.

3) Internal Linking

We focus a lot on external links, but don't forget about the links inside your site. Make sure your internal links are getting to the right pages, have the proper anchor text, and are allowing search engine bots and visitors to easily get around your site and discover all of your content.

How Do I Avoid Being Banned?

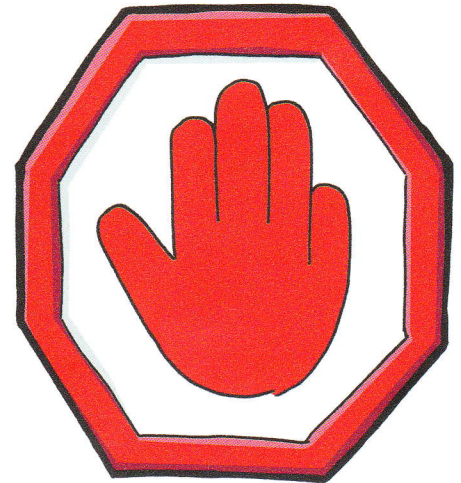
Google is always attempting to deliver the best quality results to its search users and sometimes that means changing the way it ranks pages and what constitutes a trusted or quality site. The latest update was called "Panda" and it took aim at low quality content farms and sites that had simply scraped (stolen) their content from others. These sites had climbed to top positions in *Google*, but offered little in the way of quality.

Duplicate content has long been an issue for *Google* and you can expect it to continue to penalize sites that offer little or no originality. Many sites have chunks of duplicate content; the "product description" area of every *Amazon* listing, for example, is content from the manufacturer and is the same on every other site that sells the same product. But the difference between *Amazon* and scraper sites is that it adds real value by having its own descriptions of the product, videos about the product, reviews, etc.

Here are a few additional tips that will keep you on *Google's* good side:

- Consider building a supporting network of sites that you can control and use them to promote your main site.
- Purchase expired domains that fit your market and retrofit them with your content. *Google* trusts older sites more than brand new ones, so by purchasing these sites and setting up shop there you can gain instant credibility.
- Create quality content that adds value to the Internet.

- I've mentioned this already but I can't stress it enough. Build incoming links from a variety of sources, from a variety of IP addresses, and using a variety of different anchor texts.
- Build incoming links at a steady and continuous rate, and avoid strategies that create lots of links in a very short space of time.



If I could boil down SEO into one sentence it would be to learn to think like *Google*. Understand the kind of sites that it wants to rank well and aim to produce one of those sites. If you build a solid website that is filled with quality content and has a diverse and high quality backlink portfolio, you will do just fine. **mdc**

David Jenyns (www.davidjenyns.com) is the director of *Melbourne SEO Services* – one of Australia's leading online marketing companies. Visit www.melbourneSEOServices.com to download a FREE report, "The SEO Manifesto," and discover how he can help you and your business to be found online.