



SEO

2012 & Beyond

**Search Engine Optimization
will never be the same again!**



Dr. Andy Williams

SEO
2012 And Beyond



By Dr. Andy Williams

[ezSEONews](#)
[Creating Fat Content](#)

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More Information from Dr. Andy Williams

If you would like more information, tips, tutorials or advice, there are two resources you might like to consider.

The first is my free weekly newsletter over at ezSEONews.com offering tips, tutorials and advice to online marketers and webmasters. Just sign up and my newsletter plus SEO articles will be delivered to your inbox. I cannot always promise a weekly schedule, but I try ;)

I also run a course over at CreatingFatContent.com, where I build real websites in front of members in “real-time” using my system of SEO.

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Pre & Post Penguin SEO

On February 11th, 2011, Google released the Panda update. The update was designed to filter out low quality web pages from the index. This was necessary because an earlier release (codenamed caffeine) massively increased the number of web pages that Google needed to handle - much of it was low quality. At the time, Panda left webmasters scratching their heads as to why their sites were penalized. The answer was simple - their pages were not deemed sufficient quality.

On 24th April 2012, Google unleashed the Penguin. If Panda was a 1 on the Richter scale of updates, Penguin was surely a 10. It completely changed the way we need to think about SEO. It seems that Penguin's job was to find web pages that had been optimized beyond the "tolerance level" for that site, and punish them. That's right, just about everything you have been taught about SEO in the last 10 years can be thrown out the window. Google has moved the goal posts.

Fast-forward to today...

Ask a bunch of webmasters to define the term SEO and I bet you'll get a lot of different answers. I'm sure that three of the most common phrases you'll hear are on-page factors, off-page factors and link building.

Definitions of SEO will differ depending on the type of person you ask and even when you ask them. SEO before Google introduced the Panda update was easy. After the Panda update it was still easy, but you needed to make sure your content was good. After Google released the Penguin update, SEO suddenly became a whole lot harder. Let me explain this with a diagram:

SEO Pre-Panda & Penguin



In the diagram above, I have noted two forms of SEO:

1. **White Hat SEO** – approved strategies for getting your page to rank well. Google offers [guidelines](#) to webmasters which spell out approved SEO strategies.
2. **Black Hat SEO** – strategies that Google dislike and would like to penalize. These include a whole host of strategies from on-page keyword stuffing to backlinking blasts using software to generate tens of thousands of backlinks to your site.

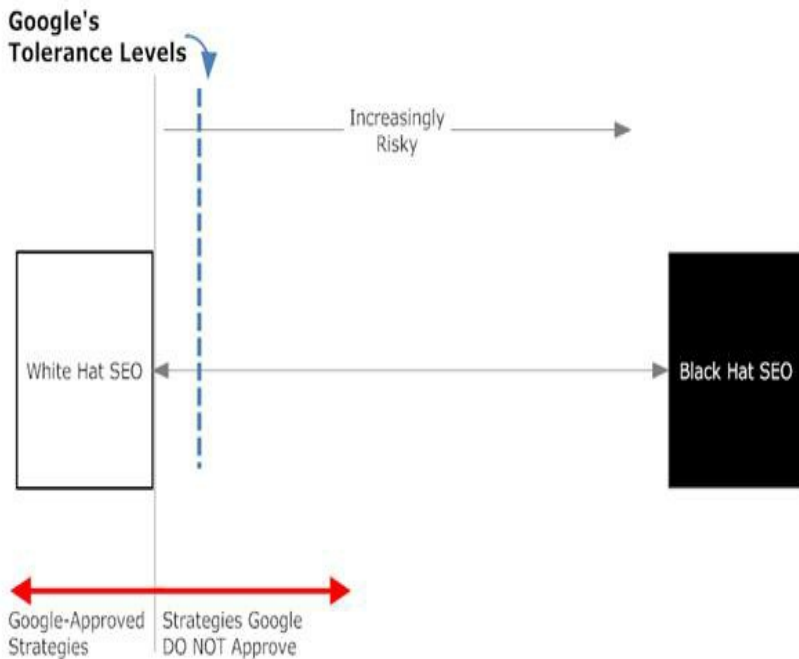
If you think of this as a sliding scale from totally safe “White Hat” SEO to totally dangerous “Black Hat” SEO, then you can imagine that as you move to the right with your SEO, you are more likely to get into hot water with Google (at least in the long term). As you move more to the left with your SEO, you are more likely to be safer in Google.

Before Panda & Penguin, most webmasters knew where the lines were drawn and took their risks accordingly.

When Google introduced Panda, the only real change to this was that

webmasters now needed to make sure that the content on their website was unique, interesting to visitors AND added something that maybe no other webpage on the topic had. No small task, but to beat Panda, which is essentially a Google add-on that looks for quality, this is our target.

When Google introduced Penguin, they completely changed the face of SEO, probably forever, or at least as long as Google continues to be the dominant search engine. Here is a diagrammatic representation of how I now see SEO:



We've still got White Hat and Black Hat, but the connection between them is not as straight forward for the webmaster.

The "increasingly risky, increasingly safe" line that I drew in the first diagram (pre-Panda & Penguin) has now become the line that marks the approved and non-approved strategies boundary. This is now right up

against the white hat boundary.

You'll notice that there is a new "Tolerance" lines drawn on the diagram. This tolerance line can move left to right, depending on how Google tweak their algorithm. If they want to come down hard on "spammers", they'll move the line to the left. If too many good sites get taken out as "collateral damage", they may move the tolerance line to the right a bit (although see the section later on "Trust v No-Trust"). Generally though, for most sites, the tolerance level is very close to the White hat boundary.

A webmaster that uses techniques which are further to the right than this approval line is risking their rankings.

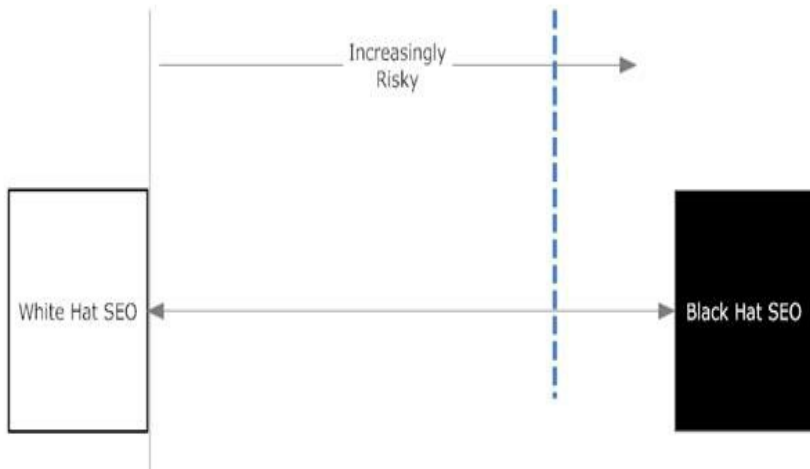
Now, these diagrams, while good to work from are not the whole truth.

Let's just consider the current state of SEO – the one post-panda & penguin.

Trust v No-trust

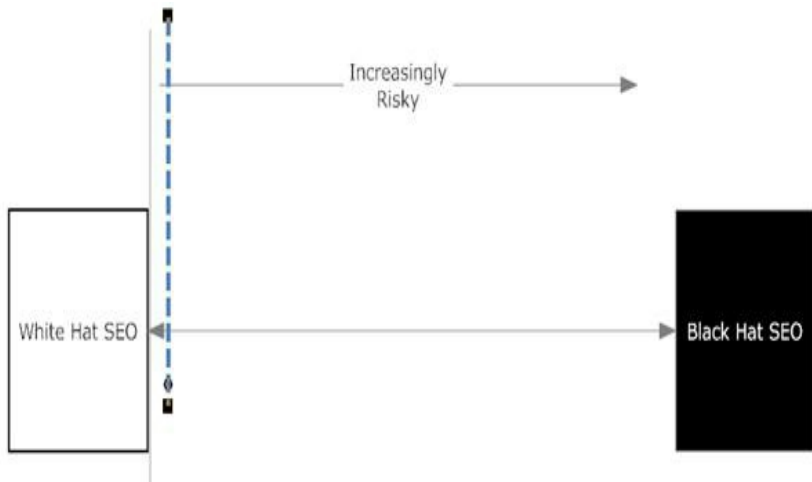
The Google Tolerance line will be in a different place depending on the site that is being ranked. For a site that has proven its worth and Google trusts a lot, we might see the diagram like this:

A Trusted Site



Yet for a new site, and one that has no track record to speak of, the diagram will probably look a lot more like this.

A Non-Trusted Site



The only difference is in the location of the dashed “tolerance line”.

In other words, Google are a lot more tolerant to sites that have built up authority and trust than they are to new sites or sites that have not been able to attain a decent level of authority.

A high authority site with lots of trust can withstand a certain amount of spammy SEO without incurring a penalty (see later when we discuss “negative SEO”). The more authority, the more it can withstand.

A new site on the other hand, would be quickly penalized for even a small amount of spammy SEO.

Webmasters Living in the Past

A lot of webmasters (or SEO companies vying for your business) may disagree with my take on modern-day SEO and that's fine. The more people who just don't get it, the less competition for me and my clients.

I am sure you can find people that will say this is all rubbish and that they can get your page ranked for your terms (depending on the severity of competition of course) by heavily backlinking the page using keyword rich anchor text.

The process they'll describe is something like this:

1. Keyword research to find high demand, low competition phrases.
2. Create a page that is optimized for that keyword phrase.
3. Get lots of backlinks using that keyword phrase as anchor text.
4. Watch your page rise up the results pages.

If you don't care about your business, let them try. You might get short term gains, but you'll run the risk of losing all your rankings further down the line when Google catch up with you (and catch up, they will... eventually).

To lose all of your rankings does not necessarily take a human review, though that can get your site penalized as well. No, getting your site penalized is far easier and the process Google have created is far more "automated" since the introduction of Panda and Penguin. Go over the threshold levels of what is acceptable, and the penalty is algorithmically determined and applied.

The good news is that algorithmic penalties can just as easily be lifted by removing the offending SEO and cleaning up your site. However, if that offending SEO includes low quality backlinks to your site (especially to the homepage), things are a little trickier.

Remember that SEO you hired that threw tens of thousands of backlinks at your site using his secret software? How can you get those backlinks removed? In many cases you can't and moving the site to a new domain may be your only option.

In the rest of this book, I want to focus on what you need to do to help

your pages rank better. I'll be focusing on purely white-hat strategies because black hat is just not a long-term strategy. Remember that with a flick of a switch Google can change the goal posts again, leaving you out in the cold. Is it worth risking your business for short-term gains?

The 4 Pillars of Post-Penguin SEO

I have been doing SEO for around 10 years now and I have always concentrated on long-term strategies. That's not to say I haven't dabbled in black hat, because I have. However, almost without exception, all of the sites I promoted with black hat SEO have now been penalized. Since I don't want you to suffer the same fate with your website, I'll only be discussing white hat, safe techniques.

I divide SEO strategies into four main areas. These are:

1. Quality Content
2. Site Organization
3. Authority
4. What's in it for the visitor?

These are the four areas that you need to concentrate your efforts, so let's have a look at each of these in turn.

1. **Quality Content**

There are a number of different types of content that you can add to your site including articles, product reviews, quizzes, videos etc. However, no matter what type of content you are looking at, quality it has to:

1. Be created for the visitor, not the search engines. That means it needs to read well and have no visible signs of keyword phrases that have only been added to help the page rank better.
2. Add value to the top 10 SERPs (if you want to rank in the top 10, your page has to be seen as adding something unique to that collection of pages).
3. Give your visitor what they want.

To put it simply, all of the content on your site has to be the best you can make it.

A good rule of thumb I like to follow is, would the content look out of place in a glossy magazine?

If you hire ghostwriters, make sure you proof read to ensure that **facts are correct** and there are **no spelling or grammar errors**.

As you read through the content that you intend to post onto your website, ask yourself:

- Is it content that your visitors will find useful?
- Is there information in there that your visitors are unlikely to know, and therefore find informative?
- If it's a review, does it sound overly hyped up? Are there both sides of the argument (i.e. positives and negatives)? Is there information in the review that is not available on the manufacturer's website or Amazon. Does the review offer a different way of looking at things, which may help the buyer decision?

To help us clarify what we see as quality content, let's take a look at some poor content.

Here is the first paragraph of an article I found online. Can you guess what the author was trying to optimize the page for?

Understanding Pomegranate Juice Benefits

Some people may not be that knowledgeable about pomegranate juice benefits but it is actually a very effective source of Vitamin C. The pomegranate fruit contains a lot of healthy nutrients and you can get a lot of good immune system boosters out of pomegranate juice benefits. It can actually provide around 16% of the required amount of Vitamin C that adults need to take on a daily basis. Pomegranate juice benefits also include Vitamin B5 as well as the antioxidant element of polyphenols and potassium.

The underlined keywords are part of the Kontera advertising system so just ignore that.

It's not so difficult to guess the main phrase the author was targeting is it?

"Pomegranate juice benefits" – it sticks out like a sore thumb. In fact, in a relatively short article (415 words) that phrase appeared 17 times. That's a density of 4%!

How many people think a density of 4% is OK or natural? Is repeating the same phrase 4 times every 100 words natural?

Let me tell you what a natural density is.

Ready for this....

It's **whatever density occurs naturally when an expert in their field writes an article.**

If you look back at that opening paragraph, there is an even bigger sin.

Here, look again:

Understanding Pomegranate Juice Benefits

Some people may not be that knowledgeable about pomegranate juice benefits but it is actually a very effective source of Vitamin C. The pomegranate fruit contains a lot of healthy nutrients and you can get a lot of good immune system boosters out of pomegranate juice benefits. It can actually provide around 16% of the required amount of Vitamin C that adults need to take on a daily basis. Pomegranate juice benefits also include Vitamin B5 as well as the antioxidant element of polyphenols and potassium.

Did you notice anything strange about that highlighted phrase?

It doesn't make sense, does it? This is a very clear indicator that the author was stuffing that phrase into the article in an attempt to help the article rank higher for that phrase.

You know, the sad thing is that this type of article may well have ranked well before Panda and Penguin. Why is that sad? Because searchers had to put up with this kind of rubbish.

Today, no amount of sneaky black hat techniques could get this page into the top 10 (at least not for the long term). That is the difference between pre and post Panda/Penguin SEO.

If I actually do a search for "pomegranate juice benefits" in Google, the top ranked page (at the time of writing) included the exact phrase ONCE in an article of over 1000 words in length. That's a density of 0.1%.

OK, so first lesson to learn – throw keyword density rules out of the window.

What may be a surprise to many, is that out of the top 10 pages ranking for the term “pomegranate juice benefits”, only THREE have that phrase in the page title. In fact, **only three of the top 10** pages actually include that phrase anywhere in the article.

Do you think that statistic is just a fluke?

Try it with any search term that isn't a brand name or product name. In general, the top 10 search results in Google list far fewer pages containing the actual search term (although this does seem to fluctuate quite a bit as Google twiddle their algorithm “dials”).

So how is Google able to decide on how to rank webpages for the term Pomegranate Juice Benefits (or any other search term) if they are not looking for that phrase on the page?

The answer to that lies in the words on the page. Let me ask you a question.

Does your article sound as if it was written by an expert?

The reason I ask is that when an article is written by somebody who really knows their subject, they will use a certain "niche vocabulary". That is, they will use words and phrases that actually define the topic of the article.

You can read an article I wrote on this called "[Niche Vocabulary - why poor content can't hide in Google](#)". You will see in that article, that if your article does not contain its niche vocabulary, you're very unlikely to rank in Google for the long term.

Every article you write will have its own niche vocabulary.

Two articles on a similar topic will share a percentage of that niche vocabulary, but not all of it will be shared.

Let's take the same example used in that article – epilepsy – and have a look at how the pages in Google use the niche vocabulary.

To carry out a test, I found a number of words on the top 10 pages of Google ranking for the term epilepsy using [Web Content Studio](#). These words appeared on many of the top 10 pages ranking for that term. These are what I call theme words (or niche vocabulary), i.e. words that commonly appear in articles that are written about a topic.

Here are the theme words I found for the term epilepsy:

age, aid, anti, brain, cause, children, control, develop, diagnosis, diet, doctor, drugs, epilepsy, epileptic, guide, health, help, home, information, ketogenic, life, living, log, medical, medications, part, plan, research, seizure, seizure-free, seizures, side, special, support, surgery, symptoms, take, term, test, time, treatment, types, unit, work

What I would like to do is check a couple of different epilepsy "sub-niches" to see if these words appear. The sub niches are:

1. epilepsy treatment

2. ketogenic diet

Both of these terms are highly related to epilepsy (the ketogenic diet is a diet that helps cure epilepsy in a number of patients). Since they are both talking about epilepsy, they both should contain a lot of the epilepsy niche vocabulary.

First let's have a look at the top ranking pages for the term **epilepsy**. Here is a screenshot showing the number one ranked article with the theme words I found earlier highlighted in yellow:



epilepsy <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/pmh0001714/> temporal lobe epilepsy seizure disorder last reviewed march 28, 2011. epilepsy is a brain disorder in which a person has repeated seizures (convulsions) over time. seizures are episodes of disturbed brain activity that cause changes in attention or behavior. see also seizures causes, incidence, and risk factors epilepsy occurs when permanent changes in brain tissue cause the brain to be too excitable or jumpy. the brain sends out abnormal signals. this results in repeated, unpredictable seizures. (a single seizure that does not happen again is not epilepsy.) epilepsy may be due to a medical condition or injury that affects the brain, or the cause may be unknown (idiopathic). common causes of epilepsy include stroke or transient ischemic attack (tia), dementia, such as alzheimer's disease traumatic brain injury infections, including brain abscess, meningitis, encephalitis, and aids brain problems that are present at birth (congenital brain defect) brain injury that occurs during or near birth metabolism disorders that a child may be born with (such as phenylketonuria) brain tumor abnormal blood vessels in the brain other illness that damage or destroy brain tissue epilepsy seizures usually begin between ages 5 and 20, but they can happen at any age. there may be a family history of seizures or epilepsy. symptoms symptoms vary from person to person. some people may have simple staring spells, while others have violent shaking and loss of alertness. the type of seizure depends on the part of the brain affected and cause of epilepsy. most of the time, the seizure is similar to the previous one. some people with epilepsy have a strange sensation (such as tingling, smelling an odor that isn't actually there, or emotional changes) before each seizure. this is called an aura. for a detailed description of the symptoms associated with a specific type of seizure, see absence (petit mal) seizure generalized tonic-clonic (grand mal) seizure partial (focal) seizure signs and tests the doctor will perform a physical exam, which will include a detailed look at the brain and nervous system. an eeg (electroencephalogram) will be done to check the electrical activity in the brain. people with epilepsy will often have abnormal electrical activity seen on this test. in some cases, the test may show the area in the brain where the seizures start. the brain may appear normal after a seizure or between seizures. to diagnose epilepsy or plan for epilepsy surgery you may need to wear an eeg recorder for days or weeks while you go about your everyday life. you may need to stay in a special hospital where brain activity can be watched on video cameras. this is called video eeg. tests that may be done include: blood chemistry blood sugar cbc (complete blood count) kidney function tests liver function tests lumbar puncture (spinal tap) tests for infectious diseases head ct or mri scan often done to find the cause and location of the problem in the brain. treatment treatment for epilepsy may involve surgery or medication. if epilepsy seizures are due to a tumor, abnormal blood vessels, or bleeding in the brain, surgery to treat these disorders may make the seizures stop. medication to prevent seizures, called anticonvulsants, may reduce the number of future seizures. these drugs are taken by mouth. which type you are prescribed depends on the type of seizures you have. your dosage may need to be changed from time to time. you may need regular blood tests to check for side effects. always take your medication on time and as directed. missing a dose can cause you to have a seizure. never stop taking or change medications without talking to your doctor first. many epilepsy medications cause birth defects. women wishing to become pregnant should tell the doctor in advance in order to adjust medications. epilepsy that does not get better after two or three anti-seizure drugs

You can only see a small section of the article here, as it's quite long, but I'm sure you'll agree that theme words are well sprinkled throughout.

Let's repeat this but using the number one ranked article for that term **epilepsy treatment**:

the other, newer drugs such as levetiracetam and lamotrigine are usually selected instead. clobazam has a powerful action in controlling seizures, and is very useful as an additional drug where seizures cannot be controlled by one drug alone, or when it is not intended to continue treatment over a very long period (for example, when anti-epileptic drugs are given routinely for a year or two after brain surgery). clobazam is presented in capsule form (100mg, orange and white capsules, 50mg, all white capsules), in liquid form (30 mg/5ml strength for children, 100 mg/5ml, "clobazam forte suspension" for adults), and as chewable tablets for children (50 mg, "infatabs") the drug is slowly released, so that theoretically it would be possible to take the medication as a single daily dose, however, people's memories bring what they are, it is recommended that the medication be taken twice a day (e.g. after breakfast, and after the evening meal as a routine) the usual dose for an adult of average size is 3 to 4 capsules of 100 mg strength per 24 hours. clobazam overdose produces symptoms similar to drunkenness, with drowsiness, unsteadiness on the feet, etc. blood levels of clobazam will indicate the true picture. short term side effects of clobazam are not usually a problem, but side effects developing gradually over a period of years do present serious objections to its long term use, especially as other effective anti-epileptic drugs which do not have these problems are now available. these long-term side effects of clobazam are the growth of hair on the face, arms and legs, especially in female patients of dark complexion, unhealthy overgrowth of the gums, with a tendency for them to bleed, and mental sluggishness and loss of memory. if clobazam is to be taken over a long period, special attention should be paid to brushing the teeth and generally maintaining good oral hygiene. an uncommon complication of clobazam therapy is the development of an allergic measles like rash, which requires substitution of the drug with another. back to the anti-epileptic drugs memantine ethosuximide parke davis Pty Ltd this drug is effective in controlling one form of epilepsy only, namely absence seizures (formerly known as "petit mal"), as this form of epilepsy begins in childhood, memantine is made available as a red syrup (250 mg/5 ml) and as capsules (250 mg). the dose required will vary according to blood levels and body weight, the average dose for a child aged 6 years being one capsule, 2 or 3 times a day. side effects are not common, but include nausea and digestive upset, drowsiness and sleep disturbance. back to the anti-epileptic drugs memantine benzodiazepine drugs these drugs have sedative and anti-anxiety properties as well as being anti-epileptic. they are in fact only fairly weak drugs against epilepsy, while their tendency to produce sedation and dependency greatly limit their usefulness. in practice, these drugs should never be used as a first choice, but rather reserved for those situations where epilepsy remains uncontrolled despite treatment with adequate doses of other anti-epileptic drugs. the benzodiazepine drugs include: rivofol (clonazepam, roche products Pty Ltd) frisson (clonazepam, hoersch australia Ltd) valium (diazepam, roche products Pty Ltd) mogodon (nitrazepam, roche products Pty Ltd) the main side effects of these drugs are sedation and drowsiness in the daytime, there is a risk of producing drug dependency. also, patients may experience various unpleasant side effects, such as restlessness, sleep disturbances, etc. when these drugs are withdrawn after a long period of administration. back to the anti-epileptic drugs memantine barbiturate drugs these drugs were widely used in the 1950's and 1960's, but are now considered to be obsolete. they are not very effective in suppressing seizures, but they frequently cause slowing of the intellect and depression. withdrawing these medications can be extremely traumatic, with anxiety, restlessness, tremors, insomnia, and an increased risk of convulsions being prominent as the drug leaves the system. an effort should be made to

Once again we see the theme words sprinkled throughout the content as we would expect, since this article is also about epilepsy.

Let's look at the final example that the **ketogenic diet**:

the number of calories is carefully tailored to the needs of the child. if the child is gaining too much weight, then we decrease calories. children appear to grow normally and should only gain weight in proportion to the increase in height. how long must children remain on the diet? children whose seizures are completely controlled on the diet often discontinue it after being seizure-free for two years. others continue the diet as long as they find it useful. if the diet is stopped, or the ratio decreased, and the seizures return, then the diet can either be re-instated or the person can re-start medications. how does the diet work? it appears that the high fat intake combined with carbohydrate and caloric restriction result in ketosis. the current standard of care requires that the urine remains 4+ (160-1100umol) for ketones. recent evidence suggests that the serum ketone levels may be far more critical than those in the urine. while 4+ urine may be necessary for seizure control it may be insufficient for optimum control and calories may need to be further restricted or the ratio of fat to protein and carbohydrate may need to be increased. studies of serum levels of ketones and their correlation with seizure control are in progress. how the ketone bodies suppress seizures is unknown, but currently an area of investigations. however, suppression of ketosis by the administration of carbohydrates may quickly result in a recurrence of seizures. future areas of research the success of the diet is decreasing, and sometimes controlling, difficult-to-control seizures has re-awakened interest in how the diet works, and has started researchers looking at animal models by which it can be studied. with animal models it will be possible to study how the ketone bodies modify seizure thresholds, and the mechanisms by which the diet controls seizures. perhaps eventually, when we understand the mechanisms, we can develop a medication which will simulate the effects of the diet. clinical research may also alter how the diet is administered. when we are able to monitor blood levels of the ketones rather than just the urine, we may be able to better adjust the diet to achieve maximal ketosis. we may understand that higher levels of ketosis give better seizure control. we may learn how to modify the diet so that we decrease the incidence of kidney stones. we may also learn more about the effects of the diet on serum lipids, and about the long term effects of the diet. hopefully all of these efforts over the coming years will result in better seizure control for those children with difficult-to-control epilepsy. the above is an exclusive article written for epilepsy today (dec 1998 issue) by the world's leading expert on the diet, dr john m freeman md. based at the prestigious john hopkins medical institution in america. dr freeman has conducted a study, the full results of which can be found the december 1998 issue of 'pediatrics'. editor's note the medical establishment has been slower to introduce the ketogenic diet as an alternative therapy. different versions of the diet with different results and different attitudes all seem to play their part in whether any particular epilepsy specialist is prepared to offer the diet as a potential option for treatment. however, a number of hospitals may consider the diet for a limited number of children, including glasgow's royal hospital for sick children, great ormond street's hospital for sick children, the chelsea & westminster hospital, manchester children's hospital, birmingham children's hospital, leeds general infirmary and leicester royal infirmary. the central middlesex hospital in west london, together with great ormond street and st pieters linfield in surrey are conducting a study looking at two different versions of the diet and its effect on 90 children. other hospitals may be willing to offer the diet - interested parents should consult their child's neurologist. an attempt should be made to change a child's diet without medical supervision. external link. matthew's friends a charity, who with its medical board, provide information and support, specifically for the ketogenic diet. we can provide references and information on the source material we use to write our analogies, advice and information.

This too has the theme words for epilepsy sprinkled throughout.

Since all of these articles have epilepsy theme words sprinkled throughout them, they could all theoretically rank for the term epilepsy, but the most important thing is that Google will know the article is about epilepsy because they contain epilepsy-related words and phrases.

Each of these articles actually have a **slightly different set of theme words** which help to define what area of epilepsy they are discussing. We could show this by finding theme words specific to each of the three articles and we would see they were different (though there would be a core of epilepsy related words).

However, let's try something a little different. Let's look at a second test.

Test 2 - I found a number of "theme phrases" – 2, 3 & 4 word phrases that are common to the top 10 ranked pages for the three terms – epilepsy treatment, ketogenic diet & epilepsy.

I pooled all of these phrases together and then checked the top three ranking pages for epilepsy, epilepsy treatment, and the ketogenic diet.

If each article has a slightly different niche vocabulary, then we should see different theme phrases being used in each of the articles. Let's have a look at the epilepsy article first:

history of seizures or epilepsy. symptoms symptoms vary from person to person. some people may have simple staring spells, while others have violent shaking and loss of awareness. the type of seizure depends on the [redacted] affected and cause of epilepsy. most of the time, the seizure is similar to the previous one. some people with epilepsy have a strange sensation (such as tingling, smelling an odor that isn't actually there, or emotional changes) before each seizure. this is called an aura. for a detailed description of the symptoms associated with a specific type of seizure, see absence (petit mal) seizure generalized tonic-clonic (grand mal) seizure partial (focal) seizure signs and tests the doctor will perform a physical exam, which will include a detailed look at the brain and nervous system. an eeg (electroencephalogram) will be done to check the electrical [redacted] people with epilepsy will often have abnormal electrical activity seen on this test in some cases, the test may show the area in the brain where the seizures start. the brain may appear normal after a seizure or between seizures. to diagnose epilepsy or plan for [redacted] you may need to wear an eeg recorder for days or weeks while you go about your everyday life. you may need to stay in a special hospital where brain activity can be watched on video cameras. this is called video eeg. tests that may be done include: blood chemistry [redacted] cbc (complete blood count) kidney function tests liver function tests lumbar puncture (spinal tap) tests for infectious diseases head ct or mri scan often done to find the cause and location of the problem in the brain. treatment treatment for epilepsy may involve surgery or medication. if epilepsy seizures are due to a tumor, abnormal blood vessel, or bleeding in the brain, surgery to treat these disorders may make the seizures stop. medication to prevent seizures, called anticonvulsants, may reduce the number of future seizures. these drugs are taken by mouth. which type you are prescribed depends on the type of seizures you have. your dosage may need to be changed from time to time. you may need regular blood tests to check for side effects. always take your medication on time and as directed. missing a dose can cause you to have a seizure. never stop taking or change medications without talking to your doctor first. many [redacted] cause birth defects. women wishing to become pregnant should tell the doctor in advance in order to adjust medications. epilepsy that does not get better after two or three anti-seizure drugs have been tried is called "medically refractory epilepsy." surgery to remove the abnormal brain cells causing the seizures may be helpful for some patients. surgery to place a [redacted] stimulator (vns) may be recommended. this device is similar to a heart pacemaker. it can help reduce the number of seizures. sometimes, children are placed on a special diet to help prevent seizures. the most popular one is the [redacted] a diet low in carbohydrates, such as the [redacted] may also be helpful in some adults. lifestyle or medical changes can increase the risk for a seizure in a person with epilepsy. talk with your doctor about: new prescribed medications, vitamins, or supplements emotional stress illness, especially infection lack of sleep pregnancy skipping doses of [redacted] use of alcohol or other recreational drugs other considerations: persons with epilepsy should wear medical alert jewelry so that prompt medical treatment can be obtained if a seizure occurs. persons with poorly controlled epilepsy should not drive. each state has a different law about which people with a history of seizures are allowed to drive. also avoid machinery or activities where loss of awareness would cause great danger, such as climbing to high places, biking, and swimming alone. see also seizures - first aid. support groups the stress caused by having epilepsy (or being a caretaker of someone with epilepsy) can often be helped by joining a support group. in these groups, members share common experiences and problems. see:

The phrases are marked in blue.

Here is a list of theme phrases found in the epilepsy article:

activity in the brain
atkins diet
blood sugar
causes of epilepsy
epilepsy medication
epilepsy medications
epilepsy surgery
ketogenic diet
part of the brain
seizure medicines
temporal lobe
vagus nerve

Let's repeat the test using the top ranking article for epilepsy treatment:

should be avoided in women of dark complexion. dilantin also seems more likely to produce slowing of thought processes including memory than the newer anticonvulsant such as tegretol or epilim, which do not usually produce these symptoms. anticipation of pregnancy. all [redacted] carry a small risk to the unborn child. we will consider this question later. other medication. possible interaction between the [redacted] and other medication is an important consideration. a common problem is the contraceptive pill - only epilim appears to be free of significant interaction. other [redacted] may make the pill less effective by speeding up its metabolism in the liver, or the pill may repay the compliment by accelerating the removal of the medication from the circulation. this does not mean that epilim is the only [redacted] a woman may take when using the contraceptive pill but that the doctor prescribing must take this possible interaction into account. back to [redacted] can more than one drug be used? it is generally preferable to take one drug only, since there is a risk of interaction between [redacted]. indeed, some neurologists go as far as saying that any patient taking more than one such drug is being mismanaged. others disagree. there are some patients who, despite excellent blood levels of their medication, continue to have frequent seizures. the addition of a second drug may bring control which any single drug has failed to achieve. on the other hand, one can't often justify the use of a third and even a fourth drug. back to [redacted] how safe are [redacted] in pregnancy there is a small but definite risk of malformations of infants of mothers treated with [redacted] during pregnancy. on the other hand, there is an undoubted risk to the unborn child if tonic-clonic seizures are not controlled, for these may cause temporary lack of oxygen. miscarriage in early pregnancy, premature labour in more advanced pregnancy, and injury are additional risks of uncontrolled epilepsy. the best available information indicates that malformations are between two and three times more common in infants of mothers who have taken these drugs during pregnancy. as a group, epileptic women's children have a higher rate of abnormalities than the children of non-epileptic women, even if not treated with [redacted], but these drugs do appear to increase the rate at which abnormalities occur. the main risk is that the drugs may interfere with formation of the nervous system. the brain and spinal cord develop from cells which must first arrange themselves into a tube-like structure. this process of formation of the neural tube seems to be one which may be interfered with by drugs. defects of the neural tube range from trivial abnormalities of the vertebrae, through to major abnormalities in which there is maldevelopment of the spinal cord with weakness of the legs and loss of bladder control. neural tube defects include the group of malformations known as spina bifida. of course, malformations occur in pregnancies where no drug has been taken - it's just that the [redacted] seem to increase the risk. all three major [redacted] (tegritol, epilim and dilantin) share this risk. it is not known which of these drugs is more likely to produce abnormalities. the risk is increased if more than one [redacted] is taken. it is possible to detect major neural tube defects in the foetus by checking the level of alpha fetoprotein in the amniotic fluid surrounding the foetus, and by ultrasound examination of the unborn child. unfortunately, these tests do not become reliable until the pregnancy is fairly advanced, (16 weeks for amniocentesis, 18 weeks for ultrasound), so that considerable emotional trauma may be inflicted on the mother in deciding whether the pregnancy should be terminated. there is some evidence that in instances where there is a family history of neural tube defect, dilantin is safer than tegretol or epilim. if a woman taking [redacted] becomes pregnant, the first question to decide is whether she needs to continue her

Here are the theme phrases on the top ranked page for epilepsy treatment:

- adverse effects
- aid for seizures
- anticonvulsant drug
- anticonvulsant drugs
- anti-epileptic drug
- anti-epileptic medications
- anti-seizure medications
- controlling seizures
- epileptic control
- epileptic treatment
- ketogenic diet

seizure control
seizure medications
temporal lobe
treatment of epilepsy
treatments for epilepsy

And finally for the phrase "ketogenic diet", here are the theme phrases:

<http://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/treatment/ketogenic-diet> [redacted] last updated 16 sep 2010, review date due 16 sep 2011 the [redacted] is a [redacted] adequate protein, low carbohydrate diet designed to mimic many of the biochemical changes associated with prolonged starvation. first developed in the early 1900s, and successfully used for the [redacted] in children during the 20s and 30s, the [redacted] was then gradually forgotten as new anticonvulsant medications were developed. the [redacted] has recently been 'rediscovered' and is achieving increasingly widespread use. its modern day role as alternative management for children with difficult-to-control epilepsy is currently being re-defined. the [redacted] is not a 'fad' or a 'quack diet', but rather is an alternative [redacted] with difficult-to-control epilepsy. the [redacted] should only be used under the supervision of a physician and a dietician. background fasting to achieve [redacted] was described in both the bible and during the middle ages, but it was only during the early 1920s that scientific papers first appeared describing the beneficial effects of prolonged fasting for children whose epilepsy could not be controlled by the few medications then available. these papers claimed that starvation, drinking only water for 10 to 20 or more days, could result in [redacted] for prolonged periods of time. during this era, when the metabolic effects of diabetes were also being studied, it was noted that the biochemical effects of fasting could be mimicked by eating a diet high in fat, but with insufficient carbohydrate to completely 'burn' the fats. the resulting 'ash' from the incompletely burned fat consisted of ketones in the blood. multiple clinical papers during the 1920s and 30s reported that approximately a third of children taking this [redacted] had their seizures largely controlled, a third had a substantial improvement in seizure control and a third received no substantial benefit. the mechanism(s) by which these ketone bodies, principally [redacted] decrease, or even, completely control, seizures in children remain(s) unknown even today. after the discovery of phenytoin in 1938, attention turned from the [redacted] to the development of new [redacted]. as new drugs were developed, the [redacted] was used less frequently, and since fewer dieticians were trained in the subtleties of the diet, it was used less frequently and often less successfully. in 1994, the successful treatment of a child with difficult-to-[redacted] led to widespread media attention and a re-awakening of interest in the diet in the united states. what is the [redacted]? the [redacted] is a [redacted] adequate protein, very low carbohydrate diet which is carefully and individually calculated for each child. calories are restricted and depend on the age and activity of the child. if properly calculated, the child should neither gain nor lose significant weight, but should grow normally for his/her stature and the weight should remain close to the ideal weight for height. if the child is overweight, calories are limited until the ideal body weight is approached. fluids are also restricted, although for reasons which are less clear, the diet provides approximately 90 per cent of the child's caloric requirement as fat (cream, butter, mayonnaise), one gram per kilogram of body weight as protein, and minimal carbohydrate intake. the diet must be supplemented with vitamins and calcium. what does the diet do? the diet was designed to simulate many of the metabolic effects of starvation. during starvation, the body first uses its store of glucose and glycogen. these begin to burn the stored [redacted] when there is not sufficient glucose available, the fats cannot be completely burned and ketone bodies (acetoacetate and beta hydroxy butyrate) are left as the residue of incompletely burned fat. the [redacted] provides exogenous fats (fat from outside the

These are the phrases found:

anticonvulsant drug
anticonvulsant drugs

beta hydroxybutyric acid
 body fat
 control of seizures
 control seizures
 diet controls seizures
 different anticonvulsants
 high fat
 high fat diet
 high fat intake
 medical treatment for children
 protein and carbohydrate
 seizure control
 seizure type
 treatment of seizure
 while on the diet

Let's compare the theme phrases of these three articles in a table:

Epilepsy	Epilepsy Treatment	Ketogenic Diet
activity in the brain atkins diet blood sugar causes of epilepsy epilepsy epilepsy medication epilepsy medications epilepsy surgery ketogenic diet part of the brain seizure medicines	adverse effects aid for seizures anticonvulsant drug anticonvulsant drugs anti-epileptic drug anti-epileptic medications anti-seizure medications controlling seizures epileptic control epileptic seizures ketogenic diet	anticonvulsant drug anticonvulsant drugs beta hydroxybutyric acid body fat control of seizures control seizures diet controls seizures different anticonvulsants high fat high fat diet high fat intake medical treatment for children

temporal lobe vagus nerve	seizure control seizure medications temporal lobe treatment of epilepsy treatments for epilepsy	protein and carbohydrate seizure control seizure type treatment of seizure while on the diet
------------------------------	--	--

This table clearly shows that each of the three articles have a different niche vocabulary.

As we saw above all three articles have theme words relating to epilepsy as we would expect. However each of the articles also had their own set of theme phrases which help to distinguish the actual sub-niche within epilepsy.

- The **epilepsy** article has a wide range of theme phrases relating to all aspects of epilepsy.
- The **epilepsy treatment** article focused more on phrases that are related to the treatment of epilepsy (big surprise eh?).
- The **ketogenic diet** article had more theme phrases relating to the diet itself and the control seizures.

How can you use this information to write better content?

If you are an expert in the field you are writing about, you will automatically and naturally use these theme words and phrases as you write about the topic. The truth is that you need to use these theme words and phrases if your article is to make sense and look authoritative.

If however you are not an expert, then things are a little more difficult. You need to find which words and phrases are important to the topic you want to write about.

As you write the content sprinkle in theme words (that are single words that are highly related to the niche). This will help the search engines to identify the topic. Also pick a small number of highly relevant theme

phrases (2, 3 and 4+ word phrases) and include these in your content (once is enough but write for the visitor, so use theme words and phrases when you need to).

These theme phrases should be the most important ones that relate to the niche and will leave the search engines in no doubt about the topic. Do not under any circumstances use theme words or phrases that are not necessary. E.g. don't just repeat a phrase 3 or 4 times in the content because you want that page to rank for that term. Google's Penguin will be onto you and you could find your rankings drop for keyword stuffing or unnatural use of keywords.

Would you like to see an example of a badly written article where theme phrases have been repeated solely for search engines? Here is the first half of an article. Ignoring the quality of the information in this article, let's just look at an example of keyword stuffing:

DIY Architecture

Let's say you are planning a room addition. Did you know that you already possess the talents which allow you to calculate a comfortable size for the room addition? You may even possess some good design skills. Now you might think that I am wrong on this one.

For sake of discussion, let's assume that your local zoning ordinances will permit you to do just about anything. Some cities have strict setback lines and so forth that may limit the size of your planned addition - you must be aware of these limitations.

Go into your present living room. How does it feel? Imagine if it were say 6 feet wider and 8 feet longer. Maybe this size would allow you the space for that new couch, or a fireplace, built-in bookcases, whatever. The point is this. Use your existing rooms as starting points. You can measure them and stretch them to suit your needs. You need to start thinking in terms of space and how much you need.

Putting it on Paper

Remember earlier how I told you that my drafting skills were poor. Today, you don't need to know how to draw! If you have a fairly modern computer and sufficient memory, there are many affordable computer design programs that will draw your planned room addition.

I have highlighted one phrase that occurs three times (but I could have chosen a different example in this same article). The phrase is "room addition" and to me it sticks out because it is actually a little awkward to read, even unnatural when you read the text around the phrase (which is fluff and padding). When that happens, I assume that the webmaster included the term for the search engines, and if we check Google Keyword Tool, we can get a fairly strong confirmation of that:

Search terms (1)			
Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches ?	Approximate CPC (Search) ?
<input type="checkbox"/> room addition ▾	High	60,500	€2.67

That phrase has 60,500 monthly searches, and costs advertisers around 2.67 Euros PER CLICK. With the AdSense ads on this site, that phrases could well have been a nice little earner.

Funnily enough, the site where this article is found used to be a site that Google showed off as a quality AdSense/Affiliate website. In the recent rounds of Panda and Penguin updates, this site was penalized. This caused a lot of webmasters to conclude that Google does not like affiliate sites. After all, an affiliate site that Google once praised was penalized.

My view on this is that Google simply does not like poor or spammy content. This particular site was probably lucky to get away with its content for as long as it did as it probably never got a real in-depth human review. When Google introduced the Panda and Penguin updates, these largely automated pieces of code caught the site and identified much of its content as low quality and in violation of the Google guidelines. On looking through a lot of the earlier content on that site, I'd agree that the site was penalized for good reason.

2. Site Organization

The way you structure your site is extremely important not only for the search engines but also human visitors. Good organization coupled with a clear and intuitive navigation system is vital.

From a human point of view, it makes sense that content on a similar topic should all be found in the same section of the site. For example, if you have a website selling bikes, all of the mountain bikes should be found together, all of the road bikes in another section, and maybe bikes for children in another section.

If a 22 year old mountain biker came to your site, she should be able to browse the mountain bike stuff without seeing road racers or children's bikes.

If you're using WordPress as a site builder, organizing your site like this is extremely easy. You simply create a category for each section and assign that category to relevant posts. I tend to only assign one category to every post as this makes for a tighter organization (a better silo). If I need to further categorize the articles, e.g. having all 26 inch frame bikes on the same page, I'd use tags instead of categories for the frame sizes. We'll look at tags a little later.

This type of "silo" structure works very well for the search engines as well because it helps them categorize your content. Think of the site that has reviews of the following bikes and accessories.

- Allen Deluxe 4-Bike Hitch Mount Rack
- GMC Denali Pro Road Bike
- GMC Denali Women's Road Bike
- GMC Topkick Dual-Suspension Mountain Bike
- Hollywood Racks E3 Express 3-Bike Trunk Mount Rack
- Kawasaki DX226FS 26-Inch Dual Suspension Mountain Bike
- Mongoose Exile Dual-Suspension Mountain Bike
- Pacific Stratus Men's Mountain Bike

- Topeak Explorer Bike Rack
- Victory Vision Men's Road Bike

If you were to put them into related group (silos), those silos would look something like this.

Silo 1 Mountain Bikes

GMC Topkick Dual-Suspension Mountain Bike
Kawasaki DX226FS 26-Inch Dual Suspension Mountain Bike
Mongoose Exile Dual-Suspension Mountain Bike
Pacific Stratus Men's Mountain Bike

Silo 2 Road Bikes

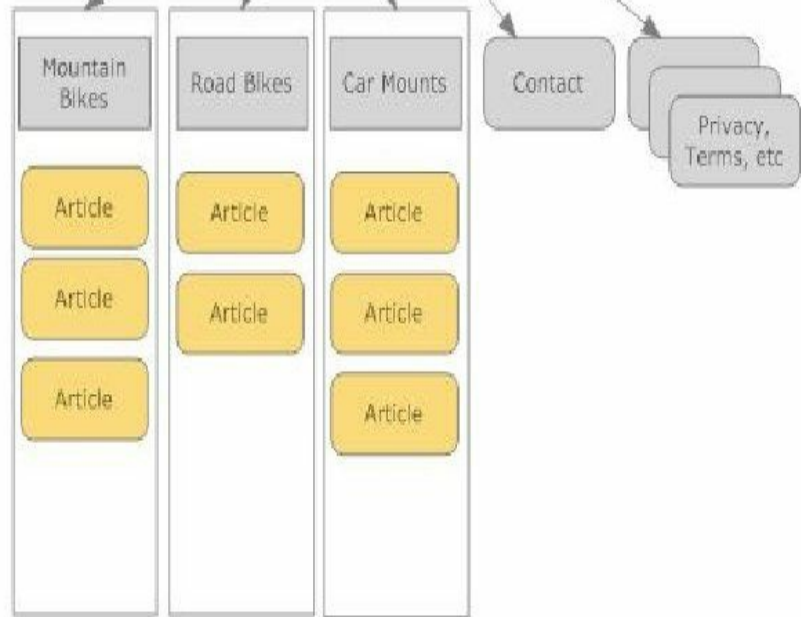
GMC Denali Pro Road Bike
GMC Denali Women's Road Bike
Victory Vision Men's Road Bike

Silo 3 Car Racks

Allen Deluxe 4-Bike Hitch Mount Rack
Hollywood Racks E3 Express 3-Bike Trunk Mount Rack
Topeak Explorer Bike Rack

So overall then, the structure of our site would be as follows:

Bike Shop
Homepage



Internal Links

One of the most overlooked pieces of the SEO puzzle is internal linking. This not only helps the search engines spider your site, but it helps visitors find other related content on your site.

With WordPress, there are plug-ins that can help you automate some of the internal linking on your site. For example "[Yet Another Related Posts](#)" plugin, or YARP to its friends, is a free Wordpress plugin that will automatically create a related posts section at the end of every article on your site. You can configure it so that it can only find related posts within the same category if you want and this can help create a tighter, more natural silo with articles linking out to related content on your site.

Here is an example of a Related Posts section from a post on one of my websites:

Related Articles

- [Activating Plugins in WordPress](#) - OK, hopefully you have uploaded the top 10 WordPress Plugins. The next step is to activate them so that your WordPress install is "using" them. Login to your WordPress Dashboard, and click on the link to the plugins page. When you get to that page, you should see your plugins listed. There are two things to notice here.
- [Using Widgets in WordPress](#) - Widgets allow WordPress users to easily add in new features to the sidebars of their templates without having to hack template code. e.g. you can add a translator widget that will translate your page into multiple languages, or you could add a Feedburner subscription box. Adding both of these (and the hundreds of other widgets).
- [Top 10 WordPress Plugins](#) - NOTE: This article is quite old. On 10th May 2009 I posted a new article with an update of what plugins I use. The article is [Top 12 WordPress Plugins](#) Here is my top 10 WordPress Plugins. I do use others, but these are the first ones I install when I setup a new WordPress site. 1.
- [Installing a WordPress Theme](#) - If you followed the tutorial for installing WordPress plugins, you will already have the skills needed. When you download a theme, you'll find that it unzips into its own folder. The following template I downloaded and unzipped is called Andreas01. You'll see that the theme includes two folders, wp-andreas01 which contains template files, and the img
- [Creating a homepage in WordPress](#) - If you have installed WordPress and the plugins recommended in my [Top 10 WordPress Plugins](#) article, you'll currently have a blog that looks like the generic WordPress blog, containing a hello world post, and an about page. Note: You can click images to enlarge them. We still have a fair bit of customizing to

There are a number of related posts plug-ins that you can use to achieve

the same thing.

Linking Pages Together

Another form of internal linking which I think is extremely important is links within the body of your articles.

For example, if you are writing an article about the "GMC Topkick Dual-Suspension Mountain Bike", you might like to compare certain features of the bike to the "Mongoose Exile Dual-Suspension Mountain Bike". When you mention the name of the Mongoose Exile bike, it would help your visitors if you linked that phrase to your Mongoose Exile review. That would also help the search engines to find that article, and help it work out what it is about (based on the link text).

This type of internal linking helps to increase indexing of your site as well as the rankings of individual pages.

To read more about internal linking between pages on your site and learn about a great Wordpress plugin that does an excellent job, I recommend you read an article I wrote on the subject called "[Internal Linking & SEO](#)".

Another way to categorize your content - Tags

Tags are another way to categorize content on your WordPress site. When you write a post, you can include a number of these tags which can help further categorize the post.

For example, if you wrote a post about the “Dyson DC 33 Animal” vacuum, you would probably put it in the category “Dyson” as that is the most logical “navigation label” for your visitors.

However, you might also like to allow visitors to easily find vacuums that use the Dyson Ball technology, or contain a HEPA filter. Rather than have a category for “Dyson Ball” and “HEPA filter” and then put that DC33 animal in all three categories, a better way would be to create tags for this extra classification.

For example, here are some tags you might use on your vacuum site:

- Upright
- Dyson Ball
- pet hair
- HEPA filter
- Bagless

These tags will help to categorize the posts within the Dyson category (and every other category on your site).

WordPress actually creates a page for each of these tags and each of these tag pages can actually rank quite well in Google.

Let's use look at an example.

These four vacuums all have a HEPA filter:

1. Eureka Boss Smart-Vac Upright.
2. Hoover Windtunnel
3. BISSELL Cleanview Helix Upright Vacuum Cleaner
4. Miele S2 Series Lightweight

The first vacuum will be in the Eureka CATEGORY with all other Eureka vacuums.

The second vacuum will be in the Hoover CATEGORY with all other Hoover vacuums.

The third vacuum will be in the Bissell CATEGORY with all other Bissell vacuums.

The fourth vacuum will be in the Miele CATEGORY with all other Miele vacuums.

However, all 4 vacuums would also appear on the HEPA Filter “tag page”.

In addition, the first three would all appear on the “Upright” tag page with all other upright vacuums.

When people visit your site, they’ll be able to narrow down their choice by Brand (using category navigation), or by looking for specific features (using Tags to navigate).

WARNING

I advise that you use tags wisely. Don't tag every post with hundreds of tags. Think about your tags and only include the most relevant ones for each post.

Use and Abuse of Tags

A lot of people do not really understand the significance of tags, and see them as a "keyword list" much like the "vestigial" keyword Meta tag. To that end, they create long tag lists for each post. Here is a screenshot of some tags assigned to one post I saw:

Tags: advantages disadvantages of solar power, advantages of a solar panels, advantages of solar cell panel, are MONOCRYSTALLINE solar pannels good, best mono solar panel price, best quality monocrystalline solar panels, bestpv panels mono or poly, buy pv panels monocrystalline, compare monocrystalin policrystalin photovoltaic, compare monocrystalline and polycrystalline, compare monocrystalline and polycrystalline pannel, compare polycrystalline vs. monocrystalline modules, crystal cells for solar panels, crystal solar, crystalline si solar efficiency, crystalline solar best, crystalline solar cell technology, crystalline solar cells cost, crystalline solar panels, crystalline solar plate cost, crystalline solar pv module, csun mono-crystalline panels, describe 2 advantages of solar cells, difference between mono and polycrystalline, difference between monocrystalline, difference monocrystalline polycrystalline solar, difference solar panels polycrystalline &, disadvantage to many solar panels, ecokes monocrystalline, ecokes photovoltaic panels, ecokes solar panel, electricity, energy, how i get Monocrystalline silicon, how many rating monocrystalline cell, how Monocrystalline cells are made, how to produce monocrytaline silicon, <http://www.monocrystal photo cells/>, is monocrystalline better than polycrystalline, is monocrystalline PV best, LUXOR Solar Mono Crystal Dickschichtmodule, maker of monocrystalline panels, mon vs poly efficiency, mono and poly crystalline, mono crystalline pv panels, mono or poly solar panels, mono silicon solar panels, mono solar panel dimensions, mono solar power, mono v poly solar panels, mono versus poly crystalline panels, mono vs poly crystalline panels, mono vs. multicrystalline solar panel, Mono-Crystalline & Poly crystalline, mono-crystalline cells vs poly, mono-crystalline efficiency rating, Mono-Crystalline or Polycrystalline solar panel, Mono-crystalline pv solar

They just key scrolling down the page. What you see in that list is just one QUARTER of the tags listed for that post.

In SEO terms, this is bad, very bad.

To understand why long tag lists is generally a bad idea, let's look what happens when you create a post.

When you make a post on your blog, WordPress will try to put the post on several pages of your site including:

1. A page specially created to show the post
2. The category page
3. On every tag page
4. On the author page

Can you see how that one post can be duplicated on multiple pages of your site?

Duplicate content on a site is not a good thing!

Let's consider now the tag pages that are created when you make a post.

If you have 50 tags assigned to a post, that article will be posted 50+ times on your blog (on 50 different tag pages plus the other pages mentioned above).

Another big problem with using lots of tags occurs when a particular tag is only used for one post. In that case, the tag page will only have the one article on it, meaning it is almost identical to the post page created by WordPress for that article.

How to use WordPress tags properly

Get into the tag mindset!

Before you use a tag on a post, think in terms of a page being created for each tag you use. Your article will appear on each of those tag pages. Is that what you want? Is that tag going to be used on other relevant posts? Never use a tag if it will not be used by several other posts on your site.

With this in mind, here is what I suggest you do:

During the design stages of your site, make a list on a piece of paper of all the tags you want to use on your site (you can add/edit this list as you build out your site, but have a list you can refer to). These will be the most important keywords for the niche, but they should be keywords that are different to the categories you have set up for the site (never use a tag that is also a category name). After all, WordPress will create pages for each category anyway; think of tags as an "additional" categorization tool at your disposal.

As you create posts on your site, refer to the tag list you wrote down, and use only tags on that list. By all means add new tags over time, but make sure that tags are going to be used more than once. Don't create a tag that will only ever be used on a single post on your site. Also, only use a few of the most relevant tags for each post.

What if my site already has a lot of posts with spammy?

Fortunately there are a number of good plugins to help you manage tags if you work with Wordpress. Just visit the Plugin directory and search for "Simple Tags". That's one that does a good job in allowing you to modify and edit your tags. Use it to clean up your site.

Modifying tag pages?

Quite often you'll find that your tag pages are getting traffic from Google. I have found that the tag pages often rank very well for the chosen tag (as a keyword phrase).

I like to modify my tag pages so that I can add an introductory section to each one (this requires some knowledge of templates which is beyond the scope of this book).

The tag page I end up with has an article/introduction, followed by a list of all related articles (those that have been tagged with that particular tag). This helps make your tag pages unique, but also allow you to add more value to your site.

Used properly, tag pages can work for you. Used without thought, tag pages can increase duplicate content on your site and increase your chances of getting penalised by Google.

3. Authority

Here is a question for you:

What is an Authority Site?

If you go over to the [Free Dictionary website](#) and search for authority, there are a lot of different definitions. This definition is probably most apt with regards to websites:

au·thor·i·ty (ə-*thôr*-'tī-ē, ə-*thŏx*'-ē-*thôr*'-ē-*thŏx*'-ē)

n. pl. au·thor·i·ties

1.
 - a. The power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge.
 - b. One that is invested with this power, especially a government or body of government officials: *land titles issued by the civil authority.*
2. Power assigned to another, authorization: *Deputies were given authority to make arrests.*
3. A public agency or corporation with administrative powers in a specified field: *a city transit authority.*
4.
 - a. An accepted source of expert information or advice: *a noted authority on birds; a reference book often cited as an authority.*
 - b. A quotation or citation from such a source: *biblical authorities for a moral argument.*
5. Justification; grounds: *On what authority do you make such a claim?*
6. A conclusive statement or decision that may be taken as a guide or precedent.
7. Power to influence or persuade resulting from knowledge or experience: *political observers who acquire authority with age.*
8. Confidence derived from experience or practice; firm self-assurance: *played the sonata with authority.*

So to make your website an authority site, it has to be an **“accepted source of expert information or advice”**.

That obviously starts with creating a well-optimized site filled with fantastic content (the first two pillars of good SEO that we have talked about). However, those two pillars are not enough to make your site an authority, because no-one will have heard about you or your great site.

Your site (or your own name if YOU personally want to be the authority) MUST be well-known in your particular niche.

So how do you get well known?

Well that's the easy part – ***you need to put your site name and face out there on as many relevant, high quality places as you can, with links pointing back to relevant pages on your site.***

This all comes down to getting backlinks to your site, but it is also the area that can quickly get you penalized, especially if your site is relatively new or doesn't have much authority yet.

There is another aspect of this I want to discuss before we look deeper at backlinking, and that is linking out from your site to authority sites in your niche.

Think about it for a minute.

We are all part of a huge web of interlinked websites. If you were talking about something in your niche, doesn't it make sense that you might make references to other authority sites?

e.g. If a search engine was trying to evaluate your page on the Atkins Diet, don't you think that links to other peoples studies on the diet, as well as medical references, etc. would help make your page more of an authority? Sure it would, as long as your content was also excellent. It would also help instill confidence in your visitor and give them more value.

When you are writing content for your website, don't be afraid to link to other authority sites if they have relevant information. Don't even use NOFOLLOW links, as that just tells the search engine that you:

- (a) Don't trust the site you are linking to, or
- (b) You are trying to hoard Page Rank to your own site.

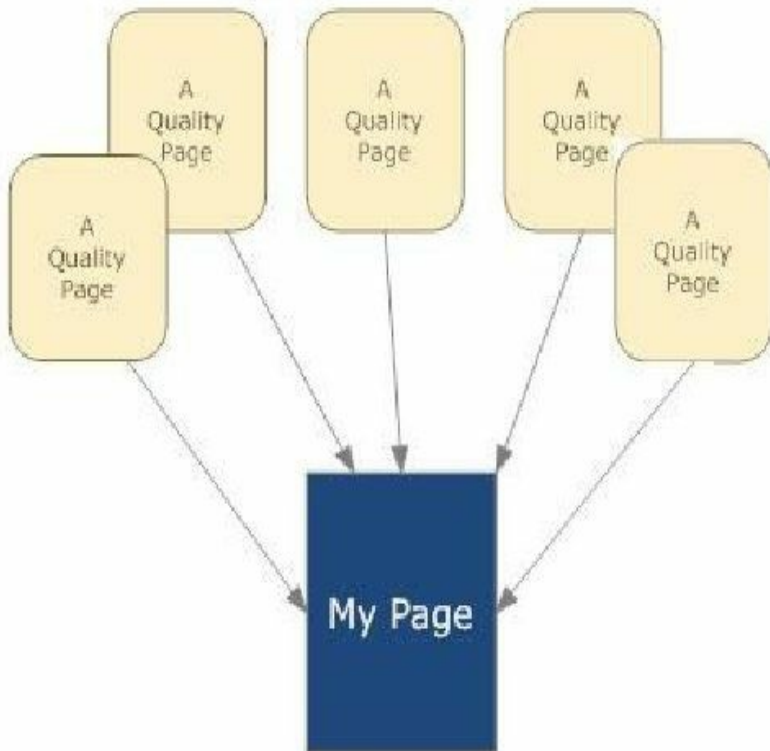
I do recommend though that you open these links in a new window so that your visitors are not taken away from your site if they click these links. What you may even decide to do is have a reference section at the end of your content, with active hyperlinks to other authority sites.

In short, link out to other authority sites - wherever it makes sense and you think it will help **your visitor**.

OK, outbound links are sorted.

What about the links coming into your site?

The general concept is this:



Search Rankings Increase

As you build quality links to your page, your page will move up the search

engine rankings.

Some people will tell you that it doesn't matter whether the inbound links are on pages that are highly related to your site or not, but that just doesn't make too much sense, and with Penguin and Panda quick to penalize, I recommend you ALWAYS consider quality in every backlink you get. That means quality of the page that your link is on (look to get links on authority sites), and quality of the content on the page your link is on.

NOTE: Having backlinks on pages/sites in a different niche to your own DID once work. However, that has all changed with Panda and Penguin.

Think about it logically.

If you had a website on "breeding goldfish", and you had 100 inbound links to your site but 95% of those were on pages that talked about things like:

- Prescription drugs
- Viagra
- Auto maintenance
- Wedding speeches
- Golf Equipment
- Etc

What is that telling the search engines?

I think that Google would look at these backlinks and decide that you were involved in backlinking strategies with the sole purpose of ranking better. Do you think they'd look favorably at that? No, and their quality guidelines say so.

If the search engines want to use inbound links as a measure of authority, then surely the most authoritative links you could get would be from quality pages that were on a similar topic to the page they link to?

With Google Penguin, this may be even more important as Google appears to be giving less weight to the anchor text and more to the actual THEME of

the webpage (or site) that the link is on. Therefore, look for links from pages and sites that are relevant to your own, and look for quality sites to get your links on.

Is Negative SEO real?

Negative SEO is a relatively new term that refers to webmasters/SEOs who build poor quality links to their competitor's website to get it penalized. Many SEOs agree now that since Penguin, negative SEO is a reality. I think it has been a reality since even before Panda.

Before we look at negative SEO and how it might work, let's look back over the last couple of years.

When Google released the Panda Updates in 2011, a lot of people complained that Google was targeting affiliate sites simply because their site got dropped, or lost serious rankings. My take on this is not that Google hates affiliates, but Google hates poor content and many affiliate sites were poor content. Most affiliate sites I have seen break so many of the Google guidelines that it does not surprise me they got hit. They have poor content and engage in dodgy link schemes.

In the past we all assumed that backlinking could not hurt us. If it could, then a competitor could bring your site down by creating lots of spammy backlinks.

I had a site that was several years old and a PR2.

Around the beginning of the 2011 (before Panda) I started some aggressive backlinking. I wanted to use this as a test so I set up about 150 blogs that I could use to get backlinks. I wanted to use blogs that I controlled so I could delete all backlinks if I needed to.

I started submitting content to these 150 sites, with backlinks going back to pages on my site.

For several weeks, my rankings climbed, and so did my traffic. I was monitoring 85 keywords, and around 60 had reached the top 10 in Google, with a large proportion in the top 3.

My site then got penalized. All 85 keywords dropped out of the top 100.

They stayed out of the top 100 for 8 weeks. I then started phase two of my test. I deleted all 150 blogs, thereby eliminating all of those spammy

backlinks.

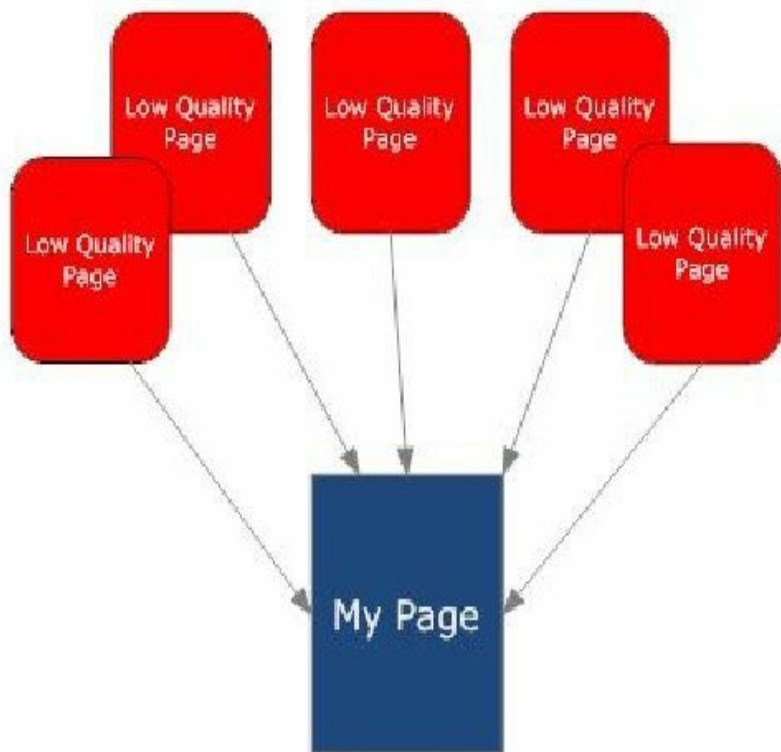
Over the next month, things started to improve slowly. Pages started climbing back into the top 100 to the point where I ended up with 64 of the 85 phrases back in the top 100. Around 42 pages were back in the top 30, and 12 were back in the top 10.

NOTE: Obviously my rankings did not return to pre-penalty levels, because they were only at those pre-penalty levels because of the backlinks I had built. However, I think it was fairly clear that my site penalty had been lifted.

So was it coincidence, or did those dodgy, poor quality backlinks really cause my site to be dropped? I have no proof either way, but from what I am hearing, the quality of inbound links may well affect rankings/penalties. This seems totally against what Matt Cutts of Google has told us in the past, but I believe it to be true.

You can read more about this if you are interested by searching Google for "negative SEO".

Let's look at how this might work. Here is a diagram:



Search Rankings **DECREASE**

In this model, poor backlinks actually cause YOUR page to get penalized and drop down the rankings.

We'll revisit this diagram later in the book when we consider the implications of negative SEO to the way we backlink our backlinks.

The point to take home from this is to get backlinks from good authority sites. If possible, get links within the body of a quality article on the page that is linking to you. I realize that is not always possible, but on many sites you can.

What type of Backlinks?

First and foremost, go for QUALITY, not quantity.

To be seen as a real authority, your site needs incoming links from other authority sites. Since Google Penguin, I no longer recommend using any type of automated link building tool.

WHAT?????

I know, I know....

“If I cannot use automated link building tools, how can I get enough links to rank well?”

To answer that question, let me ask you one thing.

Do you believe your page **DESERVES** to rank well based on the **quality of the content** and the **authority of you/your site**?

If you answer no, then you will have to go down the black hat SEO path to get your page ranked, and ultimately that path will lead to penalties and lost rankings.

For a page to rank well on your site, you need to make sure it **deserves** to rank well (in terms of content and your site/author authority).

Think of this example.

You write a page on the “health benefits of vitamin D”.

Do you think your page deserves to rank above medical sites, where the authors are medical doctors? Why? Google clearly wants to show the most useful and accurate information it can to its visitors, and that may mean choosing a medical authority site over yours, even if your content is better. The problem is that you cannot compete on the authority level unless you are an authority on the “health benefits of vitamin D” and that is the way it should be.

How might you gain authority in this area? Well quite simply, you could write articles on vitamin D and have them posted on numerous authority sites, with a link back to your site/page. If you make use of [Google's author attribution](#) (which essentially means linking your content to your Google+ profile), which I suggest you do, Google will know that you have written all these articles on vitamin D, and see you as more of an authority.

When you think about it in these terms, can you understand why I said earlier to abandon automated link builders? The links coming into your pages need to be of the utmost quality and professionalism. They need to build your authority, not ruin it by having some computer generated article with your name on it linking back to your site.

So, with the idea of quality firmly planted in your mind, let me suggest a few places you could get content published that might actually build your reputation and authority. Before I do that though, I would like to give two general guidelines for backlinking.

1. Only look to get links on authority sites in your niche.
2. Try to be EVERYWHERE.

It doesn't matter if your link is on a Page Rank zero page, as long as that page resides on a site that has good authority. Two of the only measures we have of authority are domain age and domain Page Rank, so I suggest you use these. Look for domains that are 5+ years old, with domain Page Rank of 4 or more and you should be safe.

Anchor Text?

With Google Penguin, things have changes a lot.

It used to be that to optimize a webpage we'd include our main keyword in the page title, URL, H1 header and several times in the content. We'd then point a lot of backlinks to the page using the main keyword phrase as the anchor text.

Google used to reward this type of optimization.

Then came the Penguin, and as we've seen, that type of optimization is more likely to get your page/site penalized.

As well as de-optimizing on-page factors, we have had to de-optimize backlinks to our pages. I would now recommend the following breakdown of backlinks to any one page:

1. NO MORE than 50% of backlinks using "topical" anchor text. We'll come back to that in a moment.
2. The other 50% of anchor text should be made up of general phrases, like:
 - Page URL,
 - Words that are irrelevant to the topic of the article, like "click here", "read this", "read more", "this site", "this blog", "here", etc.

OK, let's consider that first point. No more than 50% of backlinks using topical anchor text.

"Topical" anchor text links simply means that the anchor text is related to the topic of your article.

E.g. if your article was on "Potential problems during the last trimester of pregnancy", then topical anchor text links would be stuff like:

- High blood pressure in pregnancy

- Gestational diabetes
- Pre-eclampsia
- Excessive bleeding during pregnancy
- Heartburn in pregnancy
- Groin pain in pregnancy
- Backache during pregnancy
- Pregnancy complications
- Complications in pregnancy
- And so on....

A special case in terms of anchor text is the title of the page you are linking to. As long as the title is not simply your main keyword phrase, link to the page using the full title. This is natural since people will tend to use your page title when linking. I would suggest that links containing your page title are included in the "topical" anchor text percentages listed above.

A Main Keyword Phrase?

You may have a main keyword phrase in mind that you want to rank the page for, and that is fine. BUT, you still need to vary the link text pointing to that page.

In general, I would suggest that no more than 5% of your links to a page contain any one topical keyword phrase (with the exception of the page title, which can be higher, maybe even up to 20% of backlinks).

Let's look at an example backlink profile for a page.

If you want a page to rank for "third trimester complications", you should have no more than 5% of links pointing to the page with that exact term.

Firstly, I'd give the page a title that includes those main words, but not the exact phrase on its own. Maybe a title like:

"Complications in the third trimester of pregnancy"

OK, so how would I backlink to this page? What phrases would I use as anchor text?

Well, maybe something like this:

6 backlinks with the title as anchor text.

2 backlinks with "third trimester complications" (the main phrase I want to rank for).

1 backlink with each of the following phrases:

- third trimester pregnancy
- pregnancy complications in the third trimester
- third trimester of pregnancy
- third trimester symptoms
- pain during the third trimester
- bleeding during the third trimester
- light bleeding during third trimester
- pain during third trimester pregnancy

- spotting while pregnant third trimester

25 or so backlinks that use the generic phrases like "click here", "read more", or just the URL of the web page.

That would give me 42 backlinks where the anchor text was distributed as follows:

- 14% are my post title
- 4.7% include my main keyword phrase.
- 21.4% are other topical keyword phrases.
- 59.5% are "click here", "read more" type anchor text, OR the page URL.

With Penguin, we actually need fewer backlinks to rank well than before. This isn't just because so many of our competitors were penalized. Google is giving MORE weight to quality links than it use to.

One thing I suggest you do is go after quality links, and then **increase their power** which we'll look at later in the backlinking the backlinks section.

OK, where to look for backlinks?

Backlink Sources

Article Marketing

This is a strange one because some experts believe that article marketing no longer works. I personally believe that it does still work, but, and it's a big but.... don't submit the same article to lots of article directories. A far more productive approach is to pick maybe 10 quality directories and submit a unique article to each one. OK, I hear what you are saying. This means you have to write 10 unique articles. Yes, it does, but if you want to be completely "white hat" about this and build your authority in a way Google cannot object to, then that is what you need to do. With Google's Panda and now Penguin, this really is the only safe way of doing article marketing.

Forum Participation

To a lot of Webmasters, the idea of forums is simply to get backlinks from forum profiles. This is something I DO NOT recommend because it has been so overused by spammers that if it isn't already useless it soon will be (and may even identify YOU as a spammer to Google). What these spammers do is to use software to automatically create hundreds or thousands of profiles on various forums. They include a link back to their site in these profiles.

To me it seems obvious that Google can spot this type of linking very easily. Imagine a website with 5000 forum profile backlinks and not much else.

When it comes to forums, the best bang to your buck so to speak, is to get involved in the forum and help people. Make sure you have a [Gravatar](#) image (preferably your photo) attached to the e-mail address of your website, and then the same photo on your website. People will see your posts on lots of forums in your niche. You will start appearing wherever they go, and they are then likely to trust you more and click through to your website. On your website they will see your picture again and this further reinforces your perceived authority. The more they see your photo and read your contributions on these forums, the more they will recognize and respect you as an authority. This is a great way to build authority and it's nothing to do with the backlinks you can get from the forums, though these are useful as well.

Imagine how much of an authority you will be seen as if a visitor goes to several sites (in your niche) and sees you on all of them, answer questions, providing valuable information.

Youtube & other Video Sites

Creating videos that offer valuable information in your niche is a great way to increase authority and “social proof” (especially if your photo or brand image appear in the video). Videos that you create do not need to be 10 or 15 minute long, you can easily create short two or three minute videos discussing short issues in your niche. Video descriptions can be quite long, and **include a link back to your site**. Do take advantage of that!

Sites like YouTube give you your own channel which lists all of your videos. Your Youtube profile can even have a link back to your site, and other sites that are part of your network (Twitter, Facebook, etc). If someone sees one video you have done and they like it, they can go and check your channel and see a lot more videos that you have done. They can easily sign up for your Twitter or Facebook page.

There are a lot of other video sharing sites as well, which will also allow you to have a profile page. Try to use the same photo that you have on your site, and that you are using for your Gravatar. We are trying to build up the recognition factor, so that people automatically recognize you can think “Oh yes I remember him from...”

Twitter

Again we can use twitter to include a brand photo and link back to our main site. As we add tweets, your photo is sent through the system and ends up again in front of people that have subscribed to your twitter feed. Even if you don't have a lot of followers, your twitter page will have links back to your main site, which adds further authority to your persona.

There are a number of WordPress plug-ins available which automatically send a tweet to each new post on your site. I wouldn't rely totally on this plug-in for Twitter "content", as it's important to tweet interesting information you find on a day-to-day basis.

Facebook page

Another way that you can increase your authority is by setting up a Facebook page for your site or your business.

Again there are Wordpress plug-ins that can automatically post to your Facebook page when you add new content to your site.

Web 2.0 “Blogs”

There are a number of websites that allow you to set up blogs on their domain. Examples include Wordpress.com, Tumblr.com, and LiveJournal etc. You simply go to the site, sign up, and begin posting to your new blog.

As you add more and more content to these blogs, they become more and more powerful (especially if you build backlinks to these blogs).

Since you add the blog content yourself, you can insert links back to your website, but don't overdo it. These blogs should add value and be high quality, just like every other type of backlink we are looking to build. Set up these blogs and post unique information to each of them. That is how I use them. Create small blogs related to your money site, and add in a link to your money site in a small proportion of the posts you make there. Just make the information on these “free blogs” top quality.

RSS Feeds

If you use WordPress to build your site, they will have a feed that contains all of the most recent posts (you define how many posts show in the feed within the Wordpress Dashboard). You can find the feed by adding "/feed" to the end of your URL (without the quotes obviously).

For example:

<http://ezseonews.com/feed/>

Once you have your feed URL, you can submit that feed to a number of different RSS Feed websites.

Every time you add new content to your site, the feed is updated, and you get a link back to the new content.

I don't believe that this type of link helps too much with ranking of pages, especially as posts will slide off the bottom of the feed eventually, but it does help to get new content indexed quickly.

I would recommend submitting your feed to only two or three of the highest authority RSS directories that you can find.

I'd also recommend that in Wordpress, you have your feed display to only show excerpts, and only include a maximum of 10 posts in the feed. This should keep you safer from spammers who will try to steal your content by stripping the posts from your feed. The only 10 posts in the feed is more of a safety as we don't want the last 100 posts hyperlinked on 3 different RSS feed directory sites. That looks a little bit too much like we are only doing it to help rankings.

Site Directories

Getting your site listed in directories is one of the oldest forms of backlinks. These days, directory listings are not as powerful as they used to be and there are a number of directories you absolutely should not submit your site to.

There are software programs that can submit your site to directories, but I would suggest you save your money and just handpick the most relevant directories (especially the specialist niche directories that match your chosen niche) and submit my hand. More is NOT better. Look for fewer quality submissions.

Guest Blogging

Guest Blogging is a powerful way to get high quality links back to your site. It's kind of like *Article Marketing 2.0*. You submit articles to sites that accept "guest posts".

The big difference between guest posting and article directories is that guest blogs can be higher quality and much more related to your own niche. For example, you could find a lot of health-related blogs that would accept health related articles from you, but it would be harder to find article directories that were specifically health related.

It works like this:

There are sites out there that are looking for people to write content for them. You write a piece of content and submit it to these sites. If they like your article, they will post it on their website.

When you post your article, you include a resource box that can include links back to your website (or a link in the body of your article). You do need to check the terms and conditions of the sites you are writing for to see whether it's possible to include links within the body of the article – if it is use them as links embedded in content are better.

You can easily find sites that will accept your work by doing a Google search for:

"write for us" + KEYWORD

Where KEYWORD is your main niche word or phrase.

e.g.

"write for us" + health

This will return all of the websites that have the phrase "Write for Us" and are related to the health industry. Here are the top few Google results for that term:

[Write for Us | OrganicJar.com](#)

[organicjar.com/contact/write-for-us/](#) - Cached

OrganicJar.com. natural **health**, green living, organic news ... **Write For Us** ... Are you passionate about **health**, alternative medicine, superfoods or green living? ...

#1 | PR: 3 | Aoe: 1 | Dicoos: 0 | Stumbleupon: - | Twitter: 7 | Y! Links: 4,191 | Y! .edu Links: 0 | Y! .gov Links: 0 | Y! Page Links: 1 | Y! .edu Page Links: 0 | OSE links to page: ? | OSE links to domain: ? | Blekko domainlinks: ? | Technorati: - | Alexa: 998,718 | dmoz: - | wikipedia: - | dir.yahoo.com: 0 | Yahoo position: - | Majestic SEO linkdomain: 1,053

[Write For Us | Pharms Health And Medical Blog](#)

[www.pharms.co.uk/blog/write-for-us](#) - Cached

To contact us regarding writing articles for us, advertising, or any other matters please complete the form below [contact-form 1 Contact form 1]

#2 | PR: 3 | Aoe: 1 | Dicoos: 0 | Stumbleupon: - | Twitter: 2 | Y! Links: 6,884 | Y! .edu Links: 0 | Y! .gov Links: 0 | Y! Page Links: 3 | Y! .edu Page Links: 0 | OSE links to page: ? | OSE links to domain: ? | Blekko domainlinks: ? | Technorati: - | Alexa: 528,712 | dmoz: - | wikipedia: - | dir.yahoo.com: 0 | Yahoo position: 17 | Majestic SEO linkdomain: 2,000

NOTE: Pagerank data is being displayed in the SERPs using a free plugin for Firefox, called [SEO Quake](#).

With guest blogging, you can pretty much guarantee getting your content onto high PR websites.

These sites can have a lot of authority in the eyes of Google and are therefore excellent places to get your content published. However, there are other benefits.

Not only do you get backlinks from an authority site, but you'll also get to post your picture and site URL which only further boosts your own personal authority in the niche. Each article that gets accepted is exposed to a new audience – one that your own site probably never gets. In this way, guest blogging is a great way to “piggy back” on other peoples traffic.

PDF Distribution

PDF files (that can contain links to your website) can be distributed to a number of websites. Again, each site you distribute the PDF to can include your profile picture and link back to your site. To create PDFs, you can use existing content or simply write new content for the PDF file.

Microsoft Word or the free OpenOffice both have built in features to convert a word document to PDF format.

One of the best-known examples of a site that you can upload PDF documents to is:

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

You can find a lot of places to submit PDF documents to by searching Google for "submit ebooks".

Again, like everything else, look for quality sites, and think about fewer high quality sites.

Important: It is important that the backlink profile to our site is diverse! Lots of different types of backlinks from a wide range of IP addresses.

When to stop backlinking

I would recommend that you continue building high quality backlinks to the pages on your site, but with one "rule".

When you get into the top 10 for a phrase you are targeting, stop adding any more anchor text links that use that phrase. You can add more links to the page, but use other anchor texts as previously discussed.

Why?

Well it's simply to stop yourself from over-optimizing anchor text links to that page.

Adding more inbound links that use that anchor text (just to try to force your page a little higher in the SERPs) is just as likely to take you over the edge of some search engine algorithm and get the page penalised for over-optimized anchor text.

You can continue to build links to that page, but use a variety of anchor texts, the page URL, the title of the page, and other phrases unrelated to the topic, like "click here", "read more", etc.

Now, you may ask how you can get to the top 3 for a phrase if you stop building links with that anchor text. Well, we are back to a point I made earlier. Does your page deserve to be #1? If it does, then by building overall authority to the site and that page in particular, your page will rise to the top so there is no need to take risks with more anchor text links. Google knows what your page is about. They don't need over-optimized anchor text to tell them. If they think it's worthy of #1, they'll rank it #1. If they don't, then work on the quality/value of the content, and authority of your site/page.

Backlinks to Backlinks

Whenever you build a site you should be tracking a lot of information. One of the most important things to track is the backlinks pointing to your site.

[Majestic SEO](#) is a good free tool to do just this.

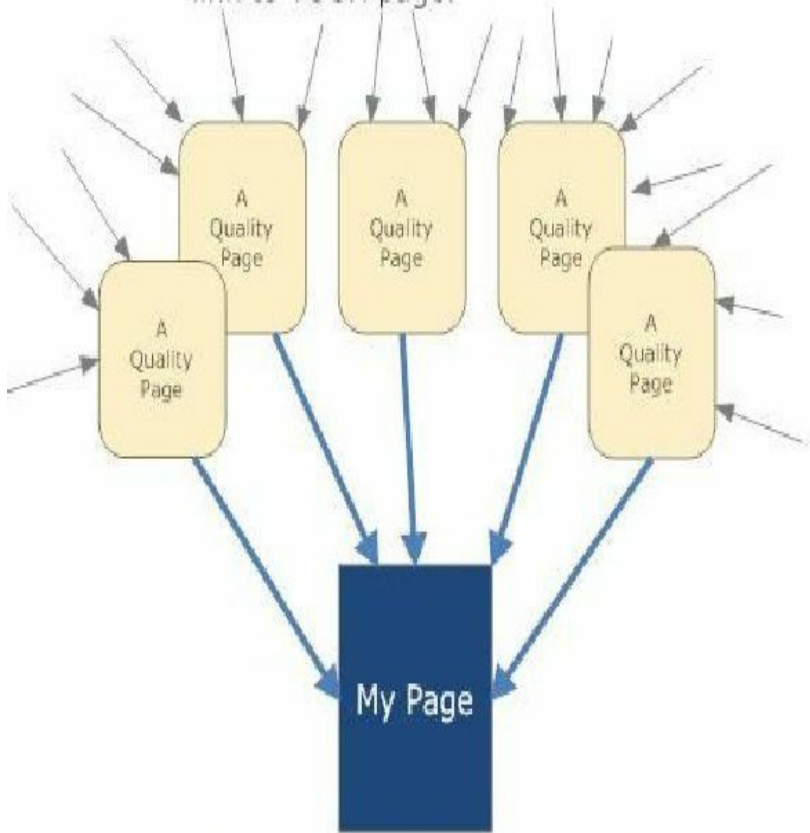
Once you have set up Majestic SEO, wait for the data to start coming in.

You will get a list of all the backlinks pointing to your site. Download the list (Majestic allow you to download the list as a spreadsheet) and check them to make sure that the backlinks still exist. Delete any links that no longer exist so you end up with a list of web pages that link to your site.

Now, work your way through the list, and point links to each of these backlinks. You can use any method of backlinking you want but I would recommend you only point quality links at these backlinks. This obviously means more work on your behalf, but I'll explain why it's important a little later. The idea is to make each page linking to one of your pages stronger, and therefore able to pass more link juice to your site.

Here it is as a diagram:

Links pointing to pages that link to YOUR page.



BIG Increase in rankings

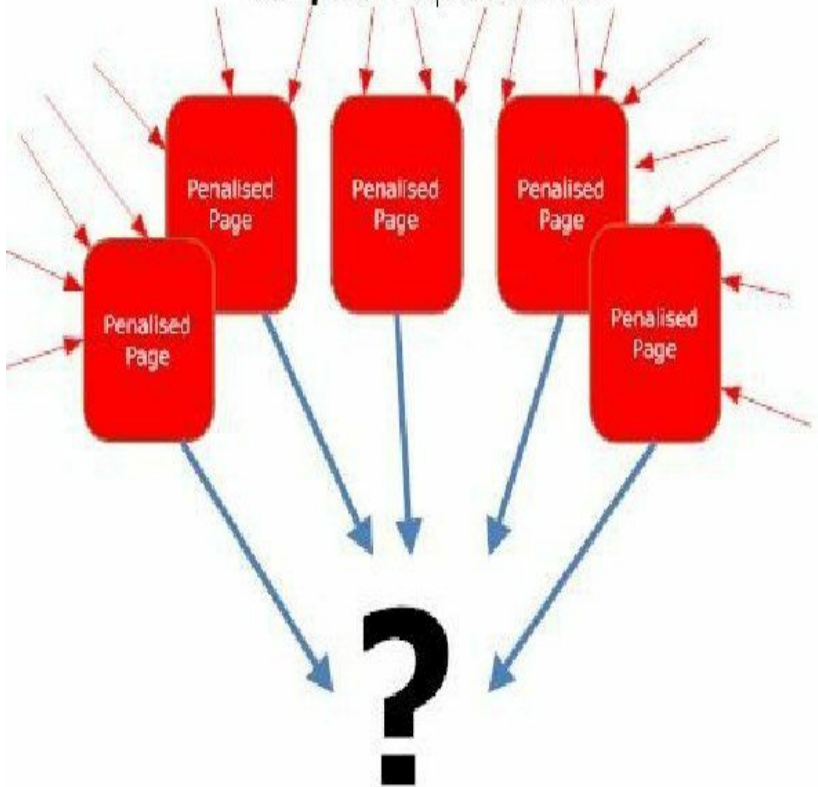
In my opinion, many webmasters go wrong with this type of backlinks to backlinks. They often tend not worry about the quality of the backlinks to

their backlinks. Many have blasted thousands of profile links, social bookmarks, spun articles, etc at their backlinks to boost them.

Most webmasters that use this strategy assume that their site is safe, since these poor quality, spammy links DO NOT point at their own site, but at the backlinks to their site (these sites that hold our backlinks are often referred to as buffer sites). They assume that these buffer sites provide a type of immunity against a penalty.

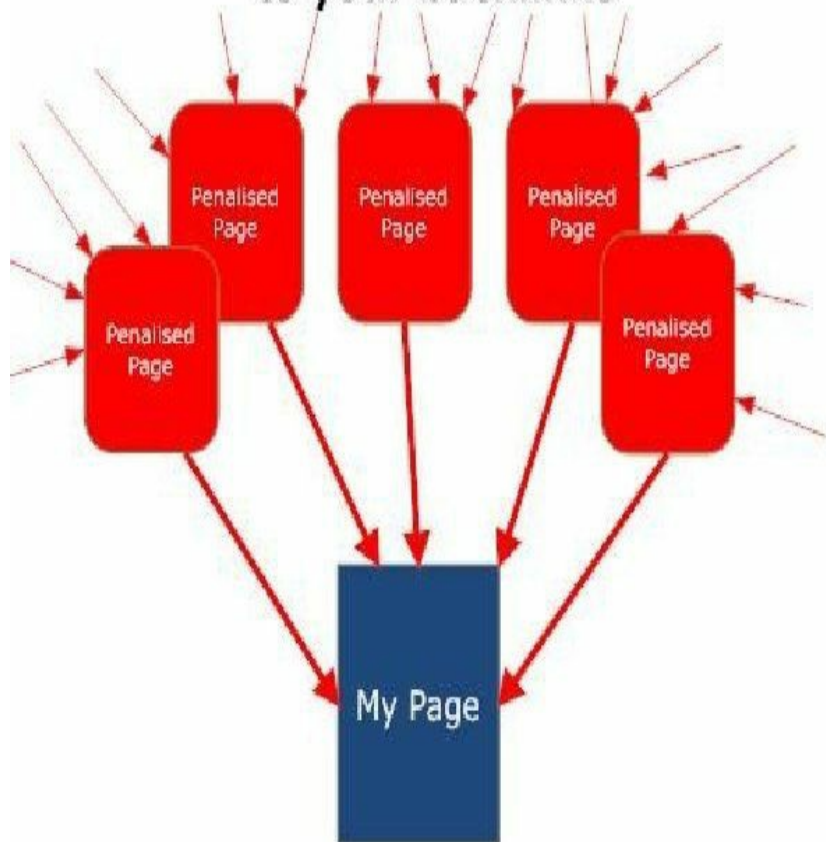
However..... Google hates linking schemes, and pyramid systems like this are no exception. Is it too farfetched to think that the negative SEO we saw earlier could render this type of link pyramid not just useless, but harmful to your site. In the diagram above, if those links to your backlinks are good quality, you have nothing to worry about. However, what if those links pointing at your backlinks are low quality, spammy links? Let's re-draw that diagram.

Spammy Links point to your backlinks



Now, instead of quality links pointing at the backlinks, we have poor quality, spammy links, which in turn, penalize the pages that hold your backlinks. What happens now when those pages link to your site?

Spammy Links point to your backlinks



Page gets a penalty and loses rankings

The penalty would be passed down the pyramid, and your pages are penalized. The idea of being immune to a penalty when linking like this disappeared when Google decided to allow links to pass a negative ranking factor.

Could this happen?

Everyone assumed that negative SEO was impossible. That is, if you wanted to take out your competition by pointing a lot of poor links at their site, it wouldn't work. With Penguin (and even before Penguin and Panda) we are re-evaluating this assumption. It is becoming more and more accepted that poor quality inbound links can hurt a webpage.

I would say that *if* Google have introduced a system where poor links pass on a negative ranking factor, then they would be wasting a massive opportunity to wipe out a lot of spammers if they didn't allow these penalties to trickle down the link pyramids.

Summary of Back Link Sources

I have listed some of my favorite sources of backlinks, though the list is certainly not definitive. There are things like blog commenting and social bookmarking that a lot of people recommend. I wouldn't overdo either of these sources though (or in fact any one source), and always maintain the Quality rule in every backlink you get.

Just remember these simple guidelines. When getting links:

1. Try to get links from as many different places as possible (we want i.p. diversity).
2. Look for quality rather than quantity. A handful of quality links will do more for your rankings than hundreds or thousands of spammy links (which actually could get your site penalized).
3. Vary your link text. If you have an article on "Flax seeds", check out the [Google keyword tool](#) to see what people are searching for when trying to find information on flax seeds. Use these **search phrases** in your link text as well as your **domain name, domain URL, the title of the page you are linking to** and even phrases like "click here", or "this article", just to get variation (which seems very important with Google Penguin). I don't recommend you use any one anchor text more than 5% of the time, and instead, **rely on your themed content to tell Google what the page should rank for**. In total, your "optimized links" should not be more than about 50% of all links pointing to a page.
4. Backlink your backlinks to make them stronger, but only backlink using high quality links. By strengthening your backlinks like this, you'll need fewer of them to compete.

4. What's in it for the visitor?

When somebody arrives on your website, you have a very short time to make a first impression. That first impression will decide whether they stay or go, so the first thing you need to do is make sure your site looks good. If you're using WordPress, then that's quite easy because there are a lot of very attractive WordPress designs out there.

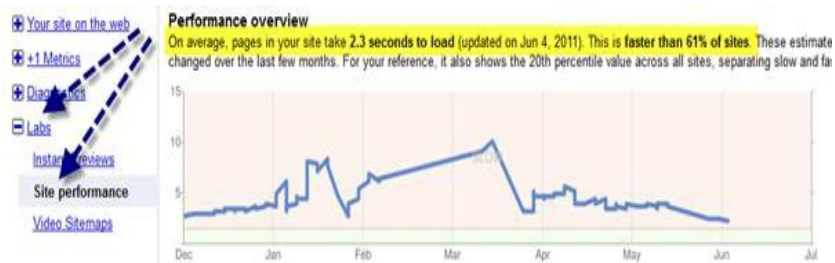
Apart from the design, another aspect of your site which will add to that first impression is the speed at which the page loads. This needs to be as quick as possible to avoid visitors waiting for stuff to load.

Install Google Analytics and get a Google Webmaster Tools Account

These tools can give you a huge amount of information on your site and your visitors. They are also Google's way to communicate with YOU!

A lot of webmasters say to avoid these tools as Google will use them against you, but I disagree. Google already have all the data they need on your site, Google Tools are their way of sharing that data with you.

Google's "Webmaster Tools" can tell you how fast your site is loading and show you a graph of load time over a period of time. You can find this feature inside the "Labs" menu. Inside there you'll find site performance:



On the same page you'll find a link to a plug-in for Firefox called "page speed":

The banner features a blue folder icon on the left. To its right, the text reads: 'Install the Page Speed browser add-on', 'Use Page Speed to evaluate the performance of your pages and get suggestions on how to improve them.', and a blue link 'Learn more'. Below this text is a large blue button with the text 'Install Page Speed' and 'Install while using Firefox' underneath it.

You can install that, and it will tell you which aspects of your page are

taking too long to load. This will then give you an idea of what you can remove, or in the case of graphics, what you need to compress more.

If you are fairly inexperienced with web development, this may be a little too confusing for you, so just make sure your images are as compressed as possible (small size) and that you are not using unnecessary plugins for the sake of it.

NOTE: An alternative to check your site load time is a site like [GTMetrix](#). You can type in your URL and get them to measure the load speed there and then in real-time:

Report generated: Wed, Sep 12, 2012, 5:58 AM -0700

Test Server Region: Vancouver, Canada

Using: Firefox 13.0.1, Page Speed 1.12.9, YSlow 3.1.0



Looks like you're running WordPress

[Have a look at our WP optimization tips »](#)

Summary

Page Speed Grade:

(87%)₊

B

YSlow Grade:

(74%)_±

C

Page load time: 2.73s

Total page size: 0.97MB

Total number of requests: 89

Not only do they give you a time in seconds for the load, but they'll tell you which parts of your site are slowing the load time down, and what you can do to fix the problems.

Website Stickiness

In Google Analytics, Google will tell you the average time a visitor stays on your site, as well as the bounce rate (how quickly someone bounces back to Google after reaching your site).

Bounce rate and time on site are a measure of how “Sticky” your site is.

Here is the bounce rate for one of my sites over the last month:



You'll notice that the maximum bounce rate over the last month was around 30%, with the average less than half that. This means that only around 15% of people visiting my site go straight back to Google after reaching the landing page. Here are the averages for this site over the last month:



Avg. Visit Duration:
00:16:32



Bounce Rate: 14.71%



% New Visits: 80.61%

Average bounce rate of 14.7% and average time on site of over 16 minutes. I'd say that the site was quite sticky, wouldn't you?

You can examine these metrics for individual pages to see where your site is being let down by poor content that does not hold the visitors attention.

The next screenshot shows the data for a number of URLs on my site.

Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
00:17:10	54.50%	7.75%
01:58:04	42.35%	0.00%
00:27:08	83.72%	9.30%
00:15:53	94.59%	18.92%
00:14:28	79.31%	24.14%
00:06:05	85.19%	11.11%
00:06:47	92.31%	19.23%
00:07:52	92.00%	4.00%
00:05:26	100.00%	29.17%
00:10:51	73.91%	8.70%

Just look for the pages with the lowest “visit duration” and the highest “bounce rate” and see if there is something you can do about them to improve the overall experience on your site. Any page with a high bounce rate is a clear indicator that it is not giving the visitor the “experience” they are looking for.

Important aspects of a web page

You need to capture the visitor's attention and let them know what you have got to them.

In terms of articles on your website, this can mean a great headline that makes them want to read more. If your visitor reads the headline and finds it interesting, they'll then read the first paragraph. The first paragraph is almost as vital as the headline itself - you might like to try creating an opening paragraph as a summary of what your visitor will find on the page below.

As you write content, try to keep sentences short (20 – 25 words) as well as paragraphs – four or five sentences. People hate large blocks of text, but also hate sentences that are so long they are confusing. When you have finished your content, read it aloud and make sure there are no parts that you have to reread to understand fully, and no parts that you hesitate over as you read it.

To make your article easier to read, use sub-heading and bullet points. Pictures and diagrams can often help to break up blocks of text to make it easier on the visitor and as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words.

NOTE: Use ALT tags on images, but do not keyword stuff them. Simply use an ALT tag that describes the image.

Another important point is to use colors and fonts wisely. Don't put white fonts on black background or any other combination that causes eye strain. Black font on white backgrounds is the best, and use fonts that are designed to work online like the Verdana, Trebuchet and Georgia. If you want to see some truly shocking use of color on the web, search Google images for the term **bad website design**.

While we're talking about content, be aware that [people are a lot less patient than they used to be](#), so be succinct and to the point. Don't waffle simply to get the number of words on the page higher.

To make your site sticky, you need to give your visitors what they want. In order to do that you need to know your visitor. Ask yourself:

- Who is it?

- What do they want?
- What answers to they need?
- What do they want to ask me?

If we are talking about your homepage, this should guide them quickly and easily to various sections of your website to give them what they want. Your visitor should be able to find what they want quickly and easily - a search box is essential, but that is easy with WordPress ;)

Ways to build Trust

1. A photo of yourself in a prominent position on your website. The sidebars or in the logo are a good place for this.

A photo helps build trust because the visitor can see who they are interacting with. The problem for Internet Marketers is that not many want their photos on their niche websites. I would suggest though that the benefits of having a photo are too strong to ignore.

If you use your photo as a [Gravatar](#), then everywhere you post comments on other sites, your photo will appear – this goes back to what we were saying in the section on building authority. How much more comforting is it for a visitor to arrive on your site and see a face they've seen before on other authority sites? This can build a high level of trust.

2. Fresh content - If people arrive at your site and see that the content is several years old, this may be enough for them to click the back button. Keep stuff like reviews up to date. If you update a review change the timestamp of the post in Wordpress to reflect the new date. If the content is "ageless", remove the date/time stamp from the post (knowledge of PHP or Wordpress templates required for this).
3. A clearly visible privacy policy, terms of use and contact page (and even an About Us page where you can mention who you are and what goals you have for the site) are great ways to help build trust. On your contact page you should ideally have a real address as this helps with the trust building. Again, it's nice to have your photo on the contact us page.

Types of content that can give your visitors what they want:

1. Answering real questions – you can find questions that people ask in your niche by looking at [Yahoo Answers](#), [Wordtracker's Free Question Tool](#), [Quora](#) and even [Ask.com](#). Find real questions and provide accurate answers.
2. Buyer guides – e.g. if your site is about Android Tablets, give your visitors a free PDF that tells them what they need to know when it comes to buying one. You can use that free guide to build a list if you want, by making visitors opt-in to your list before they are given the download URL.
3. Tutorials – Provide helpful tutorials for your visitors if you can think of some that are relevant to your niche.
4. Videos - Create informative, relevant videos and have them embedded in your web pages. Put a great title above the video to make sure your visitor clicks to watch (never make them start automatically – give your visitor the option).

Make sure the video content lives up to the title!!

Upload videos to Youtube.com and develop your own Youtube channel in your chosen niche. This will not only bring traffic, but also build credibility and trust. You can link to this channel from your site.

5. One type of page I usually include on my niche sites is a Terminology page. A niche has its own vocabulary as we have seen, and often people want to know what certain words or phrases mean. You can see an example of this type of page listing [diabetes terminology](#).

The best advice I can give is to ask you a question.

What valuable information or resources can you offer that are not available on the top 10 pages?

Make your site Interactive

1. Allow Comments from visitors and in your posts, directly ask your visitors to use the comment box. It's amazing how simple it is to say "Hey, if you've got a question or an opinion on this, leave a comment at the bottom of this post", yet a lot of people don't bother. Darren Rowse wrote a nice article on [getting your visitors to comment](#).

A lot of people turn comments off on their blog because of the huge amounts of spam they receive. However, by using a good spam blocker like Akismet (commercial) or [Growthmap Anti Spambot Plugin](#), or GASP for short (free), you can eliminate 99% of spam.

Comments allow your visitor to interact with YOU, but if they ask a question, make sure you answer it as this starts a dialogue with your target audience and builds trust and authority when visitors see you answering their questions. Answering questions brings visitors back to your site especially if you have a plug-in installed that allows them to track responses to their comments. A popular one is "[Comment Reply Notification](#)".

2. By using a ratings and review plug-in (search the Wordpress plugin directory for one), you can give your visitors the chance to award products a star rating when they leave a comment.
3. Polls – Allow your visitors to express their opinion by voting. There are free polling scripts available.
4. Provide Social Media Icons after each post so that people can spread the word on your great content. There are a number of free plugins available. Shane Melaugh created a great free one called [Social Essentials](#), as it gives you a decent set of options as well as stats on social shares.
5. Add a forum. This can be a lot of work because forums are often spammed heavily, but forums are a great way for people to interact with yourself and others. Several Wordpress plugins are available that will give you a fully functional forum on your site.

That's it! That's my SEO guide for 2012 and beyond.

So what next?

For anyone interested in learning my own methods for building authority sites, backlinking and SEO in general, you can join my free [internet marketing newsletter](#).

Finally I wanted to wish you good luck, and I hope you enjoyed this book.

If you did (or even if you didn't), PLEASE add a review on the Amazon website. You can find the book listing here:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0099RKXE8>

All the best



Andy Williams

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