

Planet Ocean's Beginner's Guide to Top Search Engine Rankings



Introduction to SEO – Let's Get Started

Are You New Around Here?



Well, you've come to the right place! Relax, and let us help you unravel the mysteries of top rankings on the search engines. Soon you'll see that it all makes sense once you've been here a little while.

As you proceed through these *Seven Lessons*, remember this is a Beginner's Guide. It's written to introduce you to **the secrets of getting your web pages well-ranked in the search engine results**. By the way, the process of designing web pages to rank high is commonly referred to as *search engine optimization* (aka, **SEO**). And, these lessons will define the terms and cover the basics so you'll be ready to *learn* and use the more advanced SEO strategies later on. Rest assured that we'll move along slowly, yet efficiently, and even have a little fun along the way.

Our goals are...

1. To help you understand the language and terms that are unique to *search engine optimization* (SEO).
2. Teach you just enough about *how search engines work* to make you effective—but without getting you bogged down in techno-speak.

3. Introduce to you the most important SEO concepts and strategies. This will get you ready to start building webpages that can rank well in the search results as soon as possible.
4. Help you avoid getting your site into trouble. After all, you *don't* want your website to get *penalized* or *banned* by Google or any other search engine.
5. Give you direction for continuing your SEO education so you can maintain high rankings that generate profits.

To help you succeed, we've arranged each lesson as a *tutorial* where the topics are outlined at the beginning. Then, starting with Lesson Two, you'll find *Advanced Reading Suggestions* that are available inside our *membership site*, at **SearchEngineNews.com**.

We think you'll be amazed and even *thrilled* by the progress you'll make within a very short time. Believe it or not, by the time you finish the **Seven Lessons within this tutorial**, you'll have joined the relatively exclusive ranks of people who know one heck of a LOT about optimizing web pages to score high in the search results! You'll certainly know the language and you'll most certainly be able to determine if some so-called *professional* actually knows *their* stuff—or not. This alone can save you thousands of \$\$ if ever you decide to hire a pro to do the work for you.

Most importantly, you'll be primed to get the very most out of our award-winning, best selling **advance SEO book**, [*The UnFair Advantage Book on Winning The Search Engine Wars*](#)

Let's get started. The first point you should remember is...

The List of Important Search Engines is short...



1. Google
2. Yahoo
3. Microsoft Live
4. Ask.com

And the list of *very* important engines is even shorter...

1. Google
2. Yahoo

Google gets the majority of all U.S. searches, Yahoo is a fairly distant second while Microsoft Live and ASK.com are competing to catch up to the leaders. And every *other* (English language oriented) search engine is an insignificant minnow in the vast ocean of search – so, for now, don't waste any time concerning yourself with them.

Take note that this guide focuses heavily on Google.

Not so much because we like Google better than the others, it's just that whatever Google does, the rest of the engines tend to follow. That's why strategies that work with Google pretty much work on all of the other major engines. Whenever that isn't the case, we tell you. And you should

also know that whenever strategic differences occur, they tend to equal out fairly quickly as the rest of the major engines scramble to catch up with Google—the undisputed leader of Internet search.

And we know what we're talking about because we've been at the cutting edge of this *search engine strategies game* since 1996 – literally the beginning of the commercial internet. The authors involved in creating this book have a collective 25 years of research experience in the science of search engine marketing.

Remember that we first published our advanced book, (*The UnFair Advantage Book on Winning The Search Engine Wars*), back in 1997 – and we've since updated it every single month; it's currently in its 145th revision! ...which we believe makes it the longest running, most up-to-date source for advanced search engine marketing strategies in the world.

Build Your Solid Knowledge Base; and then...

This *beginner's guide* will become your foundation for mastering the architecture of consistently high ranking webpages. In reality, you are learning how to work the search engines to your advantage.



Be prepared to enter the world of a dynamic, fluid marketing arena. One that is unique to the world of online commerce. As you begin building your online success model, you'll continue to grow as you gain knowledge and skill through *experience*. As with any entrepreneurial endeavor, you want to quickly move beyond the beginner level. And, as you do so, you'll find that your education *here* will become the basis for your success later on. In fact, that's our promise to you.

So let's get you started building the foundation of your online success story. In tomorrow's lesson we will cover "**The ABC's of SEO**". We'll discuss *What is Search Engine Optimization*, the difference between *Web Sites* and *Web Pages*, *How to "Help" the Search Engines "Find" Your Pages*, and more. Stay tuned for Lesson 2...

Lesson Two of Seven

The ABC's of SEO

SEO, PPC, and URL? Do you ever feel like people are speaking in a secret code when they talk about the Internet? Well, let's get you in on the secrets starting right now. In this lesson we'll teach you all about **SEO** – shorthand for *search engine optimization*.

This tutorial will cover...

- [What is Search Engine Optimization?](#)
- [Taking the Search Engine's Point of View](#)
- [The Difference Between Web Sites and Web Pages](#)
- [How to "Help" the Search Engines "Find" Your Pages](#)
- **Members Section** – [Advanced Reading Suggestions](#)



What is SEO?

The Internet is an amazing place! It has become a sort of *world marketplace* where people from all over the world come to buy and sell goods. We all know there are fortunes to be made on the Internet – but, what's the best way for you to find customers and let them know you're online?

In the real world, a business finds customers via a storefront that attracts walk-in traffic or by advertising in newspapers, TV, radio, and yellow pages. On the Internet, this translates into:

- A web address that people can type into their browser's address field (aka, *type-in* traffic)
- Buying advertising on other web sites or on Pay-Per-Click search engines (which we'll cover in Lesson Six)
- Getting your site listed in the free (aka, *organic*) search results of the major search engines, especially Google and Yahoo.

Here's where SEO comes into play...

Since type-in traffic can't usually be depended upon to provide a company with significant site-visitor-counts, most web sites rely on *buying ads* and/or getting **FREE search engine listings**.

Search engines are like yellow pages – they're a great way for potential customers to locate your site. However, if your local yellow pages listed millions of businesses, imagine how difficult it would be to find your listing within such an overwhelmingly large list.

Well the fact is that, without SEO, your potential customers will never find your business within a list of millions. Our research has proven again and again that *only* the businesses at the top of the listings – specifically **the first three pages** of the search results, get any meaningful traffic. The rest generally languish in failure.

After all, what else would you expect of web pages that are buried within a stack of millions (sometimes billions) of search results. For example, here's an actual **search results page** for the search term *collectible dolls* in Google.

Web **Results 1 - 10 of about 9,270,000 for collectible dolls**

Collectible Dolls Sponsored Links
www.eBay.com Whatever you're looking for you can get it on eBay.

Collectible Dolls Direct
New-Collectibles.com/CollectDolls Beautiful Dolls at Great Prices!

Collectible Dolls
Dolls.collectiblestoday.com Shop for collectible baby dolls, Barbie

Samantha's Collectible Dolls & Gifts
Samantha's Collectible Dolls, Bears and Figurines. Featuring Collectible Dolls Bears, and Collectible Figurines at Reasonable Prices.
samanthasdolls.com/ - 18k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Collectible Dolls and the Vintage Doll. Includes Collectible Teddy ...
Collectible Doll and Vintage Dolls. Includes Porcelain and Barbiefrom
www.anythinggoesinc.net/ - 13k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

A to Z Collectible Dolls
A2Z Collectible Dolls. Huge variety of dolls for sale, antique, vintage, modern designer Florence Maranuk. Showstoppers quality porcelain dolls.
www.a2zdolls.com/ - 4k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Annette and Friends Collectible Dolls
Offers dolls from various artists, both one-of-a-kind and manufactured.
www.afdoll.com/ - 77k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Collectibles Today
Ashton-Drake Galleries Collectible Dolls & Jewelry - Lifelike Baby Dolls ...
collectible lifelike baby doll that won the hearts of the world! ...
www.collectiblestoday.com/ct/store_main.jsp - 48k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Kaylee's Korner of Collectible Dolls
The Collectible Doll Connection to the World of Dolls.
www.dollinfo.com/ - 33k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Ashton Drake Dolls online Sponsored Links
Featuring new dolls- Most In stock, Ready to ship. So Truly Real Dolls
www.crystalcorner.com

Rebellious Dolls
Life-like with makeup, real clothes and hairstyles. Shop Collectibles.
Begoths.com

Doll Collections
Sell your doll collection
Free listing - Learn more.
base.google.com

Collectible Dolls
100,000 Stores. Deals. .
Collectible Dolls & More!
Yahoo.com

Free \$250 For Dolls
Get a \$250 Gift Card to Your Nearest Toy Retail Store for Free!
www.InternetOpinionGroup.com

Collectible Dolls Prices
300+ Collectible Doll Products
Read Collectible Dolls Reviews!
www.NexTag.com/CollectibleDolls

Collectible Dolls
Shop for dolls online.
Browse our dolls directory.

Notice the highlight in yellow shows: **Results 1 through 10 of about 9,270,000 pages for collectible dolls!** That's over 9 Million pages! So the question is:

How did these sites end up in the top positions for this search?

To answer that question we must first look at these results a little more closely. For starters it's important to understand that...

The first listing in the light-blue box is labeled Sponsored Link.

Collectible Doll Sponsored Link
www.DanburyMint.com The Perfect Gift For The Doll
Lover Huge Selection. Order Today!

This is a PAID advertisement.

Likewise, all of the listings along the right hand side of the page are also labeled Sponsored Links. **These are also paid advertisements.** This means that people have purchased the right to have their *web pages* listed in these special sections of page one of Google's search results. These Sponsored Links are commonly referred to as **Pay-Per-Click** ads (aka, **PPC**) because the companies that run these ads pay a fee every time someone clicks their ad-link. This is a topic that we'll talk about in Lesson Six.

The rest of the sites listed in the search results are called *Free or Organic or Natural or Non-paid* search results. This means that Google 'discovered' these sites on its own and believes they are the very best (most *relevant*) web sites about *collectible dolls*. **And, as you may have guessed, having a site listed on page one of the search results for free, can be like owning a giant Cash Machine!**



So, how did these sites get such a valuable free listing? Well, they used *search engine optimization* (SEO) to accomplish what looks like magic – but it isn't magic, it's on purpose and by design.

What is SEO?

In a nutshell, **SEO is a system of applied strategies and techniques that cause some web pages to appear more relevant than competing pages for a given set of search terms.** The pages with the best SEO are the pages that appear at the top of the organic search results. **This is never a matter of luck.** It is *always* the result of applied SEO. And, the more competitive a given search term, the more certain we can be that top ranking pages are there as a result of strategically applied SEO.

To begin to master this inexact science in an ever-fluctuating search engine environment, it's important to acquire the ability to see things from the search engine's perspective.

Taking the Search Engine's Point of View

Let's stop for a moment to think about a search engine's perspective—we call this *taking a search engine point of view* (SEPOV).

On the surface it appears that every search engine is competing to deliver the most relevant results possible to people who are searching for things on the Internet. And, indeed, there is much truth to that statement—it is, in fact, their stated objective. However, their *ultimate goal* is to make money!



Sponsored Links

[Ashton Drake Dolls online](#)

Featuring new dolls- Most In stock, Ready to ship. So Truly Real Dolls
www.crystalcorner.com

[Rebellious Dolls](#)

Life-like with makeup, real clothes and hairstyles. Shop Collectibles.
Begoths.com

[Doll Collections](#)

Sell your doll collection
Free listing - Learn more.
base.google.com

[Collectible Dolls](#)

100,000 Stores. Deals.
Collectible Dolls & More!
Yahoo.com

[Free \\$250 For Dolls](#)

Get a \$250 Gift Card to Your Nearest Toy Retail Store for Free!
www.InternetOpinionGroup.com

[Collectible Dolls Prices](#)

300+ Collectible Doll Products
Read Collectible Dolls Reviews!
www.NexTag.com/CollectibleDolls

[Collectible Dolls](#)

Shop for dolls online.
Browse our dolls directory.

Search engines are not unselfish public service companies. They're actually multibillion dollar corporations intent on making profits for their stockholders. Search Engines are competing to provide the most relevant search results *because* the more relevant their results, the greater the number of users they'll attract. And, since advertising revenues are tied to visitor count and search usage, all that traffic translates into dollars generated by their **Sponsored Ads**, which we mentioned previously.

Stiff competition between the major engines has led them to become very sophisticated in their quest to deliver accurate and relevant results. This makes them difficult to *trick* into thinking your site is important when it actually isn't. Our advice? —don't try to trick them. Instead, learn how to use SEO to *earn* your top placements—and allow us to show you how to show the engines that your site actually *is* important!

To provide the most relevant search results, search engines must do three things: *collect*, *classify*, and *rate* web sites. Let's take a closer look at each of these three tasks:

1. **Collect:** Search engines *collect* web pages by using what they call spiders, bots or crawlers to *crawl* the web. These **spiders** or **bots** are computer programs that jump from web page to web page by following the links they find on the web pages that they collect. **This is one reason it's very, very important for your web pages to get links from other web pages** – something that we'll discuss in detail in Lesson Four of this book.

Now that you know that *spiders*, *bots* and *crawlers* are computer programs, it's probably easy for you to imagine that they can sometimes crash—just like many other computer programs. Therefore, it's important to make your pages *easy to crawl* and to avoid complicated web design that is known to periodically make spiders crash. This is something we'll discuss later in this lesson.

2. **Classify:** After a search engine has found your site, it makes an effort to determine **what your site is about**. Engines use keywords to decide what topics to file your site under. This is important to understand because **keywords** are the most significant factor in determining rankings.

Since keywords form the basis for which the search engines operate, it's extremely important that you have an excellent understanding of the role that keywords play in determining the order of rankings in the search results. We'll cover keywords in Lesson Three.

3. **Rate:** Finally, search engines look at all of the web pages they've collected for a certain topic (i.e., *keyword*) and then they decide which pages are the most important. The most important web pages get matched up with their keyword topic and then listed at the top of the search results whenever that keyword is entered into a search.

Search engines take many factors into consideration when they rate a page; **the #1 determining factor is links!** They check to see how many pages link to you, how fast you're acquiring links, and so forth. (See Lesson Four for a complete discussion of links).

Other factors include the age of your domain name (they like older web sites better), the rate at which you add new content to your site (they like a slow and steady rate), and whether or not your page is easy for their spiders to crawl. We're going to cover this topic next.

Helping the Search Engines Find Your Pages

Having a clean, uncluttered, properly-written web page won't necessarily put you at the top of the search results. But, creating a messy, poorly-formatted page can cause the spider to leave your site without adding it to their index. Clearly this isn't good. So, **the first rule of SEO is;**

Create web pages that are search engine friendly.

Relax; this is actually pretty easy provided that you follow these **four simple steps to creating pages that spiders love:**

1. **Write Well-Formed HTML:** Be sure that your web page uses the proper formatting 'source' code – something that is called HTML. And, it's really easy to check your page's HTML by testing them with an *HTML validator*. Here's a link where you can validate your pages for free: <http://validator.w3.org/>
2. **Create a Flat Directory:** When setting up your web site, try to place pages in a directory as close to your root directory as possible. For example, in the web address...

<http://www.yoursite.com/content/articles/2005/05/msn.html>

...the page, *msn.html*, is *six directory levels deep* as you can see in the following diagram:

1 (root directory)	2	3	4	5	6
http://www.yoursite.com/	content/	articles/	2005/	05/	msn.html

A search engine's indexing-bots (we call them *spiders* because they *crawl the web*) can have a hard time finding pages that are this deep—two or three levels is better. However, one way to work around the problem is to use a *site map*...

3. **Use a Site Map:** A site map is a single web page that links to all of the other web pages on your site. You may have noticed there are sometimes large, confusing site maps on some web sites. You may have even wondered, *How is this supposed to help me navigate through this site?* Here's the secret: site maps aren't really there for you; they're there for the search engine spiders! They make the site's pages easy for the spiders to find, and index.

Since spiders use links to find pages, having all of these links in one place practically guarantees that the spiders will find all of your pages. **The secret is to link to your site map from your home page and that makes every page on your site only *two clicks away* from your home page.**

4. **Limit Your Web Pages to Small File Sizes:** Search engines will crawl and index very large pages if that page has the links to demonstrate that the content is worth indexing, but to be on the safe side and make sure that your pages always get completely indexed, we recommend keeping the indexable text on your page (not including images or HTML code) under 100kb. If you're going to be creating a highly authoritative document that you expect will garner many inbound links, then you can go higher, but most pages should stay under 100kb.

Search Engine	Max Page Size
Google	unlimited (previously 101K)
Yahoo	240K+
Microsoft Live	150K
Ask	101K+

5. **Note:** The file size limits suggested above do *not* include images – just text. And, even though most search engines now index more than 101k of text, it's still a good idea to stay below the 101k limit because that'll insure your pages will fit with all engines.

Web Sites vs. Web Pages

Okay, so you've got a web page, right? Or do you have a web *site*? Confused?

Oftentimes these terms are used interchangeably but they really shouldn't be—and it's important that *you* understand the difference.

Web **Sites** refer to an entire domain and all of its web *pages*. In other words, if your web address is www.vintage-dolls.com, then everything connected to this address is part of your web *site*. This might include any of these:

<http://www.vintage-dolls.com/info.html>,
<http://www.vintage-dolls.com/shoppingcart/>, or
<http://www.vintage-dolls.com/articles/>

Each of these individual pages, though, are just that: web **pages**.

Think of it this way: If you owned an apartment building, the building would be your web site and each individual apartment would be a web page. You own them all, but there's a distinct difference between the *building* and the *apartments*. Now, why is this important? Because, as you learn more about search engine optimization, you'll begin to notice references to both *sites* and *pages*. For example, if you do something that Google doesn't like on one of your *pages*, then Google is most likely going to penalize all of the pages on your entire **site**.

On the other hand, as you start gathering incoming links, keep in mind that you receive links from a *page*, not a site. And, as you'll soon learn, the more important a web page, the more important the *link* coming from the page.

By the way, it helps to know that web *pages* are rated according to importance on a 1 to 10 scale by Google. They call this rating scale, *PageRank*. So, if the homepage for the **site** is a



PageRank=8, but the link is coming from a deeper web *page* with only a PageRank=3, then *your* page will only receive the benefit of a PageRank=3 incoming link—a *far less important link* (and, we'll talk much more about *PageRank* in Lesson Five).

In Lesson 3 we'll cover "**The Key to Keyword Selection.**" Keywords and links are the most important elements to a successful SEO campaign. Learn how to choose your best keywords and where you should be placing them. Stay tuned...



Members Section — Advanced Reading

Now that you're beginning to understand a thing or two about SEO, you might like to carefully examine the following articles...

- 📌 [**A Top-Down Approach To Designing High-Ranking Web Pages! — How To Tweak the 10 Most Important On-Page Elements For 2006**](#) 
- 📌 [**How to Analyze Your Competitor's Sites So You Can Better Optimize Your Own Pages and Win the Head-to-Head Competition for Top Ranking**](#) 

Lesson Three of Seven

The Key to Keyword Selection

Keywords and links are the cornerstone of every successful search engine optimization strategy. In this lesson you will learn all about the role that *keywords* play in SEO. In the next lesson you'll learn how *links* critically influence search engine rankings.



In the beginning, search engine optimization was *all* about **keywords**. That's because search engines ranked pages based on how often a certain word or phrase appeared on the page. That was a *very* simple way to organize search results. Unfortunately, it also made it fairly easy for people to manipulate those search results.

These days however, search engines are much more sophisticated. Keywords, although *very* important, are no longer the *primary* element that engines use when ranking a page. That distinction now belongs to **links**. Regardless, search engines still rely heavily on keywords to help them determine *what your page is about*—something they must do before they can determine the *importance* of your page. And using keywords properly both *on* and *off* your page remains essential to high rankings! So remember that *keywords* are strategically second only to incoming links—and always bear in mind that *keywords* and *links* must work together to perform the SEO magic.

So, keywords *alone* won't tell a search engine whether or not a web page should rank number one for the search phrase **collectible dolls**—but they will tell the engine that a page is *about* collectible dolls.

After that, it's your incoming links that tell an engine how *important* your site is. So, this tutorial covers the following topics...

- 🔑 [Keywords vs. Keyphrases](#)
- 🔑 [How to Choose Your Best Keywords](#)
- 🔑 [Where to Place Your Keywords for Top Rankings](#)
- 🔑 **Members Section** – [Advanced Reading Suggestions](#)

Keywords vs. Keyphrases

Even though we use the term *keywords* in SEO-speak, the best keywords rarely come in single word form. Usually the term *keywords* means **keyphrases**—**which are collections of two or more words that people use as search terms.**



Collectible Dolls, for example, is a two-word **keyphrase** that a searcher may enter into a search.

Keep in mind that not all keywords or keyphrases are equal. You may think that the whole point of keywords is to attract searchers to your site. Think again! Obviously, traffic is

important because you want people to search, find, click, and browse your web site—but remember that your ultimate goal is to make money! ...and unless your site *visitor* becomes a *buyer*, even your best efforts will fall short of making profits.

Think of it this way. If you own a street-front store, you want people to walk by, become interested, come on in, browse a bit, and make a purchase. If you set out free coffee, provide in-store entertainment, and create an enticing atmosphere, you may attract more traffic—but if those people don't buy anything, are they really customers? ...or are they just freeloaders?

It's exactly the same on the Internet. Of course it's important to attract site visitors, but most importantly you must attract people who will *buy your product* or *sign up for your service*.

It's critical that you grasp this difference because...

the keywords that you use to optimize your web pages will determine the *type* of site visitor that you attract.

Always remember there are many different types of searchers. Some people are searching for information, some are browsing products, and some are actually cash-in-hand ready to **buy**. You must figure out which keywords the *buyers* are using and then optimize your web pages (and incoming links) for those keywords.



Here's the important point to remember... Getting a lot of people to your site is great but **attracting customers who are ready to buy is the key to keyword success.** If nobody buys, your efforts will fail no matter how much traffic your site gets.

How to Choose Your Best Keywords

Now that you know you must select keywords that attract buying customers, you're ready to begin your **keyword list**.

A good way to start is to conduct a search yourself or, better yet, have a friend or family member search for your topic. Give them a specific task. For instance, tell them they want to buy a doll for their daughter's birthday. Then, carefully watch what keyphrases they actually use. You'll probably notice how they begin their search with broad terms and then narrow down their search as they hone in on what they actually want to buy.

Here's an example...

Your friend may begin by entering the keyword **doll** into the search field. This brings up results for *Barbie dolls*, *Doll Magazine*, and *custom-made dolls*. Quickly she realizes this search is too broad, so she decides that she just wants to look for old dolls. Now she types **antique dolls** and scrolls through sites that are mostly information pages. She browses through some of these pages and, while researching, learns that she really likes German dolls, and also prefers the vintage look of the bisque model. Now she's ready to buy, so she types **bisque baby doll german** or maybe **buy bisque baby doll german** and finds a site that sells exactly what she's looking for.

What have we learned? First of all, trying to optimize for a broad keyword like **doll** is unwise. You'd be competing with some big brand names like *Barbie* and *Doll Magazine* (companies who probably have more ad-money and resources than you do). Such a general keyword will also group your site with a wide range of related topics like *custom-made dolls* and others that may not include your specific doll market. Besides, people who enter the general search term **doll** most certainly don't yet know specifically what they're looking for. It's safe to say that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, they aren't yet ready to buy a doll.

However by targeting specific keyphrases like **antique doll**, **vintage doll**, or **collectible doll** your page is far more likely to be 'discovered' at that golden point in time when the (re)searcher is transitioning into a *buyer*. These keyphrases are a good way to attract people to information pages or articles that you may offer on your site for the specific purpose of funneling customers into your sales pages.

Finally, *customers-ready-to-make-a-purchase* use keyphrases like **buy bisque baby doll german**. This is a very specific search phrase which indicates the searcher is looking for a very specific item to *purchase*. *These are the sorts of phrases you should optimize for in order to attract buyers.*

Now you're ready to write that keyword list. Here are some tips to help you get started:

1. **Be Specific:** As you now know, targeting keywords like **doll** can be a waste of time. Instead, you should use the keyphrases that your potential customers use when they are ready to make a purchase. Ironically, these can also be easier to score at the top of the search results for because, surprisingly, they often have less competition. Go figure.
2. **Check Out Your Competition:** It may seem simple, but this tactic is often overlooked. Type in some of your keywords, find out who is ranking well for those terms, and then study their pages to learn what other keywords they're targeting.
3. **Consider using Misspellings and Plurals:** When compiling your keyword and keyphrase list, remember that **doll** can also be **dolls** or that **bisque** may be misspelled as **biske**. Also, if at all relevant to your product, add foreign spellings (for example, sometimes shoppers are looking for *French* baby dolls and they may use the term **bebe** instead of **baby**).
4. **Use Descriptive Words:** Add words like **cheap**, **low cost**, **best**, and so on to your list. Think of words that pertain especially to your market, like **excellent condition** or **mint**.
5. **Use Industry Words:** If there are words used especially by your market, be sure to include them in your list. Words like **bisque**, **ball jointed**, or **Googly Eyes** are good examples in the collectible doll genre.
6. **Use Action Words:** Searchers often use keywords like **buy**, **purchase**, or **find**.
7. **Target Local Markets:** If relevant, include place names in your keyword list. For example, if you have a physical store or if you only service a certain part of the country.
8. **Use Keyword Tools:** Once you've put together your list, it's time to consult one of the *online keyword tools*. These *search term suggestion tools* will invariably suggest keywords that you've overlooked.

Keywords tools also reveal how many times a certain keyword or keyphrase was used

over a specific period of time. This gives you a *relative* idea of how popular certain keywords and keyphrases actually are with real-world searchers. Using these tools will remove much of the guesswork in separating **keywords that attract traffic** from **keywords that are a waste of time**.

Here's a list of the important *Keyword Selection Tools*

🔍 **Google AdWords Keywords Tool**

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> 

Google's Keyword Tool used to only show you the relative popularity of keywords. Not any longer! Google now reveals the approximate search volume by month of your desired keyphrases and displays the amount of relative competition for those keyphrases. Further down in the results, they also provide additional keywords for you to consider, that are related to your primary keyword.

🔍 **Wordtracker**

<https://www.wordtracker.com/trial/> 

Wordtracker is a great resource for finding new keywords and they were one of the first research tools on the market. It isn't free, but it provides real keyword counts on searches. Follow the link above and you can use their free trial – check it out!

🔍 **KeywordDiscovery**

<http://www.keyworddiscovery.com/search.htm> 

Another great keyword research tool. Unlike Wordtracker that shows you data for the past 90 days, Keyword Discovery shows data for the past 12 months, and it has a nifty feature called 'Trends' to allow you to see what time of the year your keyphrases receive the most traffic.

Where To Place Your Keywords for Top Rankings?

Once you have your keyword list, what do you do with it? Here are some tips on how to integrate them into your pages for maximum ranking benefits:

- **Keep Your Web Page File Sizes Small:** For starters, make no attempt to pack all of your keywords into every one of your pages. Instead, create more pages—each focused on a single keyphrase or just a few keywords.
- **Title Tags:** The <title> tag in your web page's HTML source code is the most important place for your keywords. The <title> tag is also the first place that search engines look to figure out what your page is about.

Search engines use approximately the first 60 characters of the <title> tag text as the description for your link in the search results. This usually works out to about 7 to 10 words. Therefore, you should place important keywords at the beginning just in case the end of the <title> tag gets cut off.

Also, we recommend that you avoid meaningless (to search engines) phrases like **Welcome to Our Web Site**. Keep non-descriptive common words like **the, of, is**, etc. to a minimum. In

SEO-speak, these are called *stop-words* because all engines ignore them—which means they waste valuable space within your <title> tag.





- **Body Text:** You should also work your keywords into the text of your page in ways that sound natural to your site visitors. Avoid over-stuffing your pages with keywords. Also avoid repeating keywords. Search engines hate keyword stuffing and repeating keywords over and over. They consider such tactics *spam* and they will penalize your page or ban your site if they catch you stuffing or repeating your keywords.
- **Header Tags:** Whenever it makes sense, place keywords in header tags <h1> <h2>, or even bold tags , or both! Search engines place a little more ranking weight to words that are found within headline or bold tags.
- **Links:** When linking to your other pages (internally within your site), use your keywords in the text of the link itself (this is called the *anchor text*) – and try to get other sites that are linking to you to do the same! Here's an example of properly using keywords as *anchor text* in the visible text of a link: [Vintage and Antique Dolls](#)

Lesson 4..."**Link Building For Top Rankings.**" We'll discuss *Link Structure, Inbound vs. Outbound Links, Good vs. Bad Links and much more.* Stay tuned...



Members Section — Advanced Reading

Now that you're beginning to understand the dual role that keywords play in both *rankings* and sales, you may be ready for some advanced reading. The following reports are geared toward helping you master the skill of keyword selection with the emphasis on making profits.

- [How to Find The Money Keywords that Trigger Sales](#) 
- [Nine Essential Steps to Choosing All of the *Right* Keywords](#) 
- [Exactly Where to Place Your Keywords for Top Rankings](#) 
- [Seven Essential Title Tag Strategies of High Ranking WebPages for 2006](#) 

Lesson Four of Seven

Link Building For Top Rankings

Links are undoubtedly the most important factor in terms of how well your web pages rank in the search results. While keywords tell search engines what your web page is *about*, **links** tell search engines that your page is *important*—and it's the important pages that unfailingly dominate the top rankings of the search results.



This means that understanding *links* is crucial to SEO success. However, **be careful! There's a LOT of misinformation regarding the best ways to build your link structure. And, getting this wrong can get your site penalized or banned by the engines** – especially at Google.

So now's a good time to sit up and pay close attention because this is the most important aspect of SEO. In this tutorial, we'll cover...

- 🍷 [Understanding Link Structure](#)
- 🍷 [Inbound Links vs. Outbound Links](#)
- 🍷 [The Importance of Collecting Inbound Links](#)
- 🍷 [Good Links vs. Bad Links – How to tell the difference](#)
- 🍷 **Members Section** – [Advanced Reading Suggestions](#)

Understanding Link Structure

By now you know what a link is, but did you know that your web site has a **Link Structure**?



That's right, your collection of **inbound** and **outbound** links form a certain *pattern* that Google and other search engines can read as either *good (natural)* or *bad (artificial)*. This is a very important concept to grasp because search engines tend to like web sites that have *naturally* collected a lot of incoming links, but they hate web sites that collect their links artificially. This may sound complicated, but it's really just a matter of understanding how search engines look at your links. Let's begin at the beginning...

Inbound Links vs. Outbound Links

Inbound links are links that point to your page. For example, let's say your website, **www.vintage-dolls.com**, trades and sells antique dolls. You may also offer information, articles, and pictures of antique dolls on your site. If someone else runs a site about *vintage Strawberry Shortcake dolls*, they may want to **link to you** as a resource. This is called an **inbound link**.

Outbound links are exactly the opposite; these are links on *your* page that point to web pages on other people's web sites. On your vintage-dolls site, for example, you might have a link pointing

to eBay or some other site that specializes in restoring old dolls. These are **outbound links**. Since these links originate on your page, you obviously have control over them—and they have little to no effect on your ranking **unless** you happen to be linking to someone in a *bad neighborhood*. If so, such outbound links can get your whole site penalized or even banned—that's a type of *bad* link that we'll show you how to avoid later in this lesson.

The Importance of Collecting Inbound Links

One of the most challenging aspects of SEO is collecting high quality inbound links. Generally speaking, the more important a page is in the eyes of Google, then the higher the quality of an inbound link coming from that page. If the link is coming from an important page that is also topic-related to the page being linked, then that link is of the *highest* value. **In a perfect world, your web pages would get the majority of their incoming links from important pages that are topically related.**

Using our *vintage dolls* site as an example, here's a cross section of sites we might want to get a link from and why.

- <http://www.walmart.com/> – because Wal-Mart's site is rated PR=8 by Google's PageRank system we know that **Google thinks it's an important site**. Unfortunately, the chances of getting a link from Wal-Mart are somewhere between zero and none. But, if we could, then we'd be getting a great link because Google thinks Walmart.com is important.
- http://www.collectiblestoday.com/ct/store_main.jsp – a top-ranked link we found when we entered the search phrase **collectible dolls** into Google. We also learned that most of the top ranked *collectible doll* sites in Google were rated PR=5 or 4. This isn't especially high for competitive keyword searches but that's about the top rating for the *doll* category of keyword searches. So, getting a link from this site even though it's only PR=5 would be a very good link.

Why?...because it's a top-rated site at Google for one of the specific search terms we are optimizing our pages for. Therefore, such a link would be coming from a *topically related* site—even if that site isn't as 'important' as some of the other non-topically related sites.

- http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Shopping_and_Services/Toys/Dolls/ — this link is from the Yahoo Directory in the category of **Toys/Dolls** (which you can see from looking at the link). Google rates this page a PR=5 which is the highest rating we have found so far for a topically related *doll* site. Furthermore, we know that Google considers Yahoo.com a very important site which they rate PR=9. So, any link coming from Yahoo will be seen as *important*. And a link from the Yahoo Directory page that is topically specific is a very good link that will help boost the rankings of the page being linked to.

By the way, in Lesson Five we will tell you all about Google's PageRank rating system and show you how to find these PR=ratings on your own. That will help you determine the importance of pages before you pursue getting links from them.

The importance of collecting *good* inbound links cannot be exaggerated. It is the holy grail of today's SEO strategies. So, as you might expect, there are schemes designed to inflate link counts that Google views as *bad*. One of your biggest challenges as a search engine optimizer will be to know the difference so you can avoid getting your site into trouble with Google. And, remember that what Google does, the other major search engines follow. They may not admit it, but the truth is, when Google sneezes the rest of the engines catch a cold.

Good Links vs. Bad Links – How to tell the difference

We've already painted a pretty clear picture of what *good* incoming links look like. They come from pages that are either *important* in the eyes of Google or else *topically related*—or both. From Google's point of view, they are **earned** links. The page being linked-to deserves them based on the content of that web page. Such links are a vote for that page based on the keyword topic category of the page. If a site is about *collectible dolls* and if the keywords, *collectible dolls* is found within the link-text (the so called, *anchor text*) and the link points to your site which is also about *collectible dolls* then you have a very good link.

Simple, right?...well, not so fast. There are other conditions and situations to take into account that can cloud the credibility of incoming links. When they cross the line, they become *bad* links. And, bad links can not only get your web pages *penalized* in the rankings, they can actually get your entire site banned!

So, let us venture forward and help you start building a **red flag list** of *bad* link possibilities so you can avoid them like the plague.

- 🍌 **Linking to Bad Neighborhoods** – There are circumstances where search engines consider a web site to be a bad egg. The most common reason is that they've been known to bend, break or flaunt the rules set forth in the [quality guidelines published by Google](#) or any one of the other engines.



Such infractions might include any one of a number of dubious 'spamming' practices that attempt to trick the engines into thinking that a web page is more important than it really is. Below we'll talk more about some of these infractions. For now, suffice it to say that there is something called a *bad neighborhood* from the search engine point of view (**SEPOV**).

If you link to a page that is known to live in a *bad neighborhood* (even if you do so innocently), the search engines tend to think that *you* are also a bad egg. They apply the *guilty by association rule* and the next thing you know, whap! —your pages are either buried at the bottom of the search results or else banished into the *nowhere to be found* zone.

As you can see, it's important that you choose your *outbound* links wisely. Use common sense and link only to reputable sites. We recommend that you use tools like the *Google Tool Bar* to determine the PageRank standing of the web pages that you link to. If a site's PageRank is ghosted (i.e., displayed in *gray* which indicates *no* PageRank score), then the site may already be

banned from Google's index—an indicator that you should avoid linking to the site or be associated with it in any way. (You can learn more about PageRank and the Google Toolbar here or else just wait until we get to the next lesson where we cover it in detail.)

Natural Links vs. Artificial Links

When it comes to your **inbound** links, there's one very important consideration from the SEPOV and that is:

*Do your inbound links look natural
from the search engine's point of view?*

So, what's a **natural looking** (i.e., **good**) set of links?

From the search engine's point of view (**SEPOV**), *natural links* are collected over time as the result of simply being a good web site containing valuable content, great images, funny observations, or whatever it takes to get other sites to link to you without being paid or otherwise coerced to do so.

While this may seem like a simplistic explanation, it truly represents the SEPOV. So, to succeed in proving to the engines that your site is **important**, you should strive to emulate the three main characteristics of a *natural* looking link structure which are:

- **The incoming links build gradually** – Natural inbound links grow slowly over a period of time. From the SEPOV, Web sites don't generally become super-popular over night. It takes a little while for people to find the site, link to it, and tell all of their friends about it.
- **The links are not reciprocal** – When someone links to you because they think you have a great web site, they don't usually ask for a link back to them. From the SEPOV, sites usually *swap links* only when they're trying to artificially increase their incoming link-count for ranking purposes—and without much (or any) regard to the *quality of the content on the page*.
- **The incoming link's anchor text is variable** – From the SEPOV, natural links show text-link variation from one site to another when referring to a common site. Artificial (bad) links are the opposite—they show *identical* text links usually because of some reciprocal link campaign where the optimizer solicited the links en masse and perhaps even paid for them. These links look artificial from the SEPOV.

Depending on the context of the page, the link-text (anchor text) of natural links found on three different pages might vary something like;

- [Find Vintage Dolls Here](#)
- [Click Here for More Information on Antique Dolls](#)
- www.vintage-dolls.com.

By the way, this is what your anchor text looks like inside the HTML source code of your web page:

Looking for Vintage Dolls? Click here!



Here's the point — Search engines are looking for sites that are genuinely popular with other web sites. That's why they prefer that you collect your inbound links *naturally* and that's why they look for these three characteristics within your link structure.

Does that mean that the only way to obtain links is to create a great web site then sit back and wait for people to find you?

Of course not!

Since inbound links are so important when it comes to your positioning in the search results, it'd be silly to just wait for them to come to you. **You should actively approach other sites and ask them to link to you, but remember the above characteristics of a natural link and do your best to make your link structure look as natural as sunshine.**

And now you should be asking...

So, what do artificial links look like? Glad you asked. Artificial links (i.e., *bad links*), have these basic characteristics:

- **They build quickly** – Sites that actively seek links in order to look important oftentimes experience an unusually quick rise in their inbound link count. This looks artificial from the SEPOV.
- **They're reciprocal** – One common way to get a link is to agree to give them a link back. From the SEPOV, a high percentage of reciprocal links relative to a site's *total incoming link count* looks artificial.
- **The anchor text is always the same** – When soliciting or buying links, it's common to suggest some standard anchor text in the link request. From a SEPOV, a high percentage of identical anchor text relative to a site's *total incoming link count* looks artificial.
- **The links may be part of a link farm** – Whenever a link referral page is duplicated on several sites, it looks like a *web ring* or a *link farm* from the SEPOV. Such link referral pages that contain links to sites, but lack descriptions or common topical interest, are seen as attempts to manipulate search results and are scorned by the engines. (We'll discuss *link farms* and *web rings* next.)



Here's the Point... You *should* actively collect inbound links, but you should do your best to make those links look as *natural* as possible. Remember, the search engines want to serve up the best, most accurate results. In order to do this, they rely on links because they see them as the most reliable way for people on the Internet to say, 'Hey, check this out! This web site is cool!' Therefore, to score at the top of the search results, you need lots of links, but you don't want to look like you solicited them whether you did so or not!

More Bad-link Warnings — As you learn more about links, you'll run into a few more SEO terms. Here are some important ones to become familiar with...

- 🍷 **Link Farms** – When a web site becomes involved in a link farm, they agree, along with many other sites, to add a *links page* to their site. This page is simply a long list of links and everyone involved in the link farm gets to add their link to the page. So, in affect, once you sign up for a link farm, you link to everyone else in the farm and they all link back to you. While this does in fact increase the inbound link count, it's clearly looks artificial to the search engines and such links are easy for them to identify. Search engines *hate* link farms and participating in one is the surest way we know of to get your entire site banned. Our advice: ***Stay far, far away from link farms!***
- 🍷 **Web Rings** – Web rings are similar to link farms because they're a group of sites that link to each other. The main difference is that the sites are set up like a circle where site 1 links to site 2, who in turn links to site 3, and so on. In a web ring, you'll often see a *previous site* and *next site* link at the bottom of the page to help you navigate around the circle. Sites in a web ring tend to all share the same topic but often lack any links from pages outside the ring. Again, search engines hate this, so ***stay away from web rings!***

How to Identify *the best, the marginal, and the worst* incoming link formats...

Incoming links come in four basic flavors. There are *direct* links, *redirected* links, *javascript* links and *nofollow* links. While it's true that each of these types of links will land the visitor on your page when they click the link, it's also true that search engines spiders have issues with two of them and are instructed not to follow one of them. Although none of them will get your pages penalized or banned, if the spider has trouble following them then you don't get credit for the link—and the engine may completely miss indexing the web page being linked-to.

Here's a rundown on the different types of links and how to recognize them when another page is using them to link to your pages;

- 🍷 **Direct Link** – This is always the **best** kind of incoming link to have. When you get a link from another page, **you want that link to be *direct***. This means there are no special instructions attached to the link; when a visitor clicks the link, it simply takes them directly to your page.

There are two ways to verify that a link is direct: The quick way is to place your mouse over the link and look down at the 'status bar' at the bottom of your browser. You should see a simple URL like `http://www.vintage-dolls.com`; the better way is to check the *source code* of the page by clicking **view** then **source** in your browser. If it's a direct link, you will see something like:

```
<a href="http://www.vintage-dolls.com">Vintage Dolls</a>
```

- 🍷 **Redirected Link** – Given a choice, you'd prefer **not** to have redirected incoming links. That's because such links are harder for search engines spiders to follow. It's possible that a spider might not find your page nor credit your page for having the link. Always bear in mind that, when it comes to links, simpler is better from the SEPOV. Redirected links are of **marginal** value. They might help, they might not.

When you view the source code of the page, a redirected link would look something like this:

```
<a href="http://www.their-site.com/redirect.php?r=http://www.vintage-dolls.com/"> Vintage Dolls</a>
```

- **Javascript Link** – Javascript links are also harder for search engines to follow. Javascript links are of **marginal** value. They might help, they might not. A javascript link would look something like this:

```
<a href="javascript:void(0)" onclick="window.open('http://www.vintage-dolls.com/')" onmouseover="status='http://www.vintage-dolls.com/'; return true;" onmouseout="status=defaultStatus; return true;">Vintage Dolls</a>
```

- **nofollow Tag** – A nofollow link is the **worse** incoming link format. When a *nofollow* tag is attached to one of your incoming links, you know that the search engine spider is being instructed specifically **not** to follow that link at all. In terms of ranking boost, your incoming link might as well not even exist!

Here's what a nofollow tag (highlighted in red) looks like in the source code:

```
<a href="http://www.vintage-dolls.com/" rel="nofollow">Click Here!</a>
```

- **Potentially Dangerous Liaison Links** — There have been many known instances where two or more web sites are owned by the same company. When such is the case it is common for these sites to link to each other. And there are good strategic reasons for doing so.

By now you might have guessed that owning multiple sites would be a strategically sound way for each of your sites to get links—from each other, of course. Certainly this is one possible way to boost incoming link counts. In fact many companies have used this strategy—and there is even a SEO term that describes it. It's called the **Mini Net** (derived from *miniature internet*).

A Mini Net is a group of web sites all owned by the same company and all linked to each other. From the SEPOV, this *can* be considered legitimate **provided that** the group of sites also has a relatively significant number of their incoming links coming from sites that are outside the ownership of the so-called Mini Net.

However, when a Mini Net has *all* or most of its incoming links coming from each other, then that group of sites look like an **isolated node** from the SEPOV. That's bad. It's also relatively easy for Google to detect. When such is the case the chances are excellent that the entire Mini Net will be banned from Google's index.

So, if your company has multiple sites then, by all means, interlink them whenever it's topically opportunistic to do so. But make sure that each site has a good balance of incoming links from sites that you do **not** own. And remember, it's all relative. If your







site has, say, 100 incoming links and only 5 (which is 5%) come from your own company's sites, then you'll probably be fine. Any more than that might be pushing your luck. And, remember also that we don't own Google—so, at best, that 5% recommendation is just an educated *guess* in a game where the rules are constantly being revised. In other words, your mileage may vary!

Now that you have a solid understanding of the fundamentals of SEO, the importance of Keywords and Links, we'll now introduce you to some more advanced concepts...Lesson 5 "**Introductory to Advanced SEO.**" Stay tuned...



Members Section — Advanced Reading

By now you may feel ready to jump into the most important part of SEO — the advanced art of link building! The following in-depth reports contain the closely guarded secrets of the top professionals. Now that you understand the basics, here's where to learn how to build *your* ideal link structure for top ranking pages.

- [The Ultimate Link Building Quick-Start Guide](#) 
- [How to Buy Links Without Getting Burned or Penalized!](#) 
- [Your 8 Week Step-by-Step Link Building Task Planner](#) 
- [How to Evaluate the Quality of a Link](#) 
- [15 Strategies for Building & Structuring Inbound Links](#) 
- [More Advanced Strategies for Building Inbound Links](#) 
- [The Top 12 Link-Offenders You Should Avoid Like A Ticking Bomb! ...how to build an incoming link structure guaranteed to stand the test of time](#) 

Lesson Five of Seven

Introductory to Advanced SEO

Now that we've laid the foundation for understanding some of the more advanced basics, we'll cover some professional topics such as *PageRank*, *The Google Sandbox*, and those notorious *Search Engine Updates*. Take a bow—you're about to step up to the next level of SEO.

This lesson will help you...

- 🍌 [Understand Google's PageRank](#)
- 🍌 [Avoid Google's notorious Sandbox](#)
- 🍌 [Survive the dreaded Search Engine Updates](#)
- 🍌 **Members Section** – [Advanced Reading Suggestions](#)



Understanding Google's PageRank

Google is always trying to figure out how *important* a page is. As you now know, Google determines your page's importance by examining its **link structure**—much more so than by counting the number of times a particular keyword appears on your page. In other words, Google ranks your web page based on...

- 🍌 *How many links are pointing at your page, and*
- 🍌 *Where those links are coming from.*

That tells them how 'important' your page really is. (To learn more about links, see Lesson Four).

Google considers a link to be a *vote from another page*. So, if someone links to your page, they are actually voting for the content on your page by telling other people to follow the link. However, **not all votes are equal!** Votes from more *important* pages have a greater positive impact on your rankings within the search results than votes from less important pages.

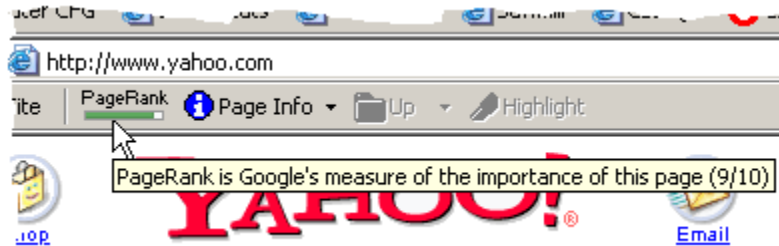
Think of it this way: If you own a *Whale Watching* page, and Bob Smith's personal web page is linking to your page, Google won't consider this to be as much of a vote as it would, say, a link from *National Geographic* or *The Hawaii Visitor's Bureau*. If you get a vote from *them*, then, in Google's eyes, you're obviously offering some great content and Google will boost your ranking.

Google has developed a proprietary system by which they assign "importance" to a web page. They call this rating system PageRank. And Google's PageRank system has been widely adopted by the search engine optimization community. The ranking is based on a 1-to-10 point scale and is displayed as (for example) **PageRank=7/10**. Search engine optimizers (SEO's) tend to abbreviate this as **PR7** or **PR=7**.

In order to see the various PageRank scores that Google assigns to pages, you must first download and install the *Google Toolbar*. It's free and located at <http://toolbar.google.com>. But before you go there to download it, check your browser toolbar to see if you already have it.

Some pre-loaded versions of the Internet Explorer web browser are including a Google search box. All you may have to do is turn the PageRank indicator 'on' via the options menu associated with the Google search box.

And if you don't already have it, it's a *very* quick download, simple to install, and attaches automatically to your web browser. Just follow the instructions. Once installed, you can view Google's *PageRank* for any site by simply hovering your cursor over the *PageRank* icon located on your browser's toolbar and, presto! ...a rating will appear like the one you see in the image below.



The higher the number, the more *important* the page. In the example above, Yahoo's homepage scored a 9 out of a possible 10, which indicates that Google believes it to be a *very* important page. PageRank can be used to determine Google's opinion of any page. Of course, a low number means that (according to Google) the page is less important. **A totally grey bar** (ghosted) **means the page is unranked, banned, or Google doesn't know about it yet.**

All in all, it's a very useful tool for optimizing pages to score well in Google's index. In fact, even though other search engines (like Yahoo and Microsoft Live) use different scoring formulas (we call them algorithms), it's always a good idea to know what Google thinks of a web page since it's a pretty darn good indicator of what the other major engines think of that web page, too.



Keep in mind that Google doesn't want anyone to know exactly how they score pages within their search results. The more we know, the closer we get to figuring out their super-secret ranking puzzle! Just because a page has a PageRank=6 doesn't mean that Google will always rank it higher than a page with a PageRank=5. However, it does give us an *indication* of Google's opinion about how important they think a page really is in the overall context of their entire index. And, most importantly, if a page's PageRank goes *up* or *down* we know right away that Google's opinion of that page is changing. This can be *very* helpful information when optimizing your own web pages.

Remember:



- If your PageRank moves UP, then you know you're doing a good job;
- If your PageRank moves DOWN, then it's time to go find out why. There may be a problem with your SEO tactics!

How Outbound Links Effect the Distribution of PageRank Equity

When one page links to another page, the linking page gives the linked page a boost in PageRank. To help you understand how this works, let's say that PageRank is sort of like money—you've only got so much of it to share. In SEO-speak, we call this **PageRank equity**.

Let's say that your PR=7 web page is worth \$7. So, you have \$7 of PageRank equity to bestow on other pages through your outbound links. However, no matter how many links you give away, your PR=7 web page will remain at PR=7. So, when you bestow it, you don't actually lose any of it, you just have only so much to give—in this case \$7 worth.

If your page links out to only one other page, that page will gain the maximum benefit from your link. In effect you've bestowed the benefit of your entire \$7 to that one page. That doesn't mean that your outbound link made that page a PR=7, but it *did* give the page the complete *benefit* of the PR=7 link. If, on the other hand, your page links out to 100 pages, then the PageRank is *diluted* and each of those pages receives the benefit of only a very slight PageRank boost from your link—just as if you gave only 1/100ths—in this case, a mere 7 cents worth to each page.

Why is this important? Well, if you own two sites, and you want to help boost the rankings on one of the pages on your other site, then you probably should link to it from your PR=7 page. And, to give that page the maximum boost, you should *not* link out to any other page. The more pages you link to, the more you dilute the ranking boost-effect of your outbound link. In SEO-speak, linking out to other sites is called **PageRank Dilution**. And, believe it or not, most site owners are unaware that this dynamic even exists. If they *did* know about it, they'd be hesitant to ever link away from their own sites.



Here's the important point: PageRank is like equity that can be bestowed on other web pages to help boost their rankings. However, the more outgoing links, the more that equity is diluted. Remember that you have control over who you link to and who benefits from the PageRank equity of your links.

How to Avoid Google's Notorious 'Sandbox'

No, the Google Sandbox is not a playground; it's a term used to describe how **new sites are often left behind in the rankings simply because they're new**.

For example, you may have a great new site that *should* rank at least some of its pages in the *top ten* of the search results for your keywords. But, for some reason, you just can't break through and your whole site is buried somewhere around *page ten*! Then suddenly, after about a year, bang! ...your site's pages begin appearing on page one of the search results. Looks like you were *sandboxed*.



If you think about it, it makes sense for Google to hinder new up-and-coming sites. One reason is to add a certain degree of stability to their search results. However, the main reason is to discourage the practice of blatantly manipulating their search results.

Many so-called 'black-hat' SEO's have been known to overstuff keywords into their pages or purchase high-PageRank links, just to name a few of the gaming tactics, in an effort to get-ranked-quick. Google seriously dislikes such tactics and they tend to penalize or ban entire sites that use them. Regardless, these black-hat SEO's tend not to care because they typically work *rank-and-ditch* sites: sites designed to achieve high rankings really fast, but not intended to stick around for very long.

For instance, someone who is selling products through an affiliate program may only need a site to rank well for a month or two. Oftentimes their 'campaign' will be finished within 60 days. So by the time Google identifies the site as a junk listing, these index-spammers have moved on to another product promotion.

Google really hates such tactics. So, you can't really blame them for applying a time-filter to new site listings to discourage aggressive marketers who would otherwise think nothing of manipulating their search results and usurping their index. Of course, the problem for new sites that are legitimate is that Google's Sandbox tends to cast a wide net and catches those who are not gaming their index. But Google doesn't care. They feel that any site that is worth indexing at the top of the results should prove itself. And, the *test of time* is one of the criteria that Google uses when ranking sites within their index.

Now, here's the Good News:

Not all new sites get Sandboxed!

In fact, here are some excellent strategies to help your site avoid the Google Sandbox.

- 🍷 Be careful about adding incoming links too fast.
- 🍷 Be sure to get links from a variety of IP addresses (i.e. *don't get all of your links from the same place*).
- 🍷 Vary the anchor text of your incoming links
- 🍷 Follow Google's Webmaster Guidelines
<http://www.google.com/webmasters/guidelines.html> 📄

Of course, there's no guarantee. But, any site that *fails* to follow the advice outlined above, is just about guaranteed to get Sandboxed for somewhere between six to fourteen months. The average is about one year.

By the way, **here's one more way to work-around the Google Sandbox — and it's possibly the best way:**

- 🍷 ***Plan ahead.*** If you know you're going to be developing a site sometime down the road, get that domain up-and-running with a very basic homepage in place. Collect a few incoming links. Once you're ready to further develop the site, enough time is likely to have passed that it's already out of the Sandbox!

Surviving those Dreaded Search Engine Updates

As with hurricanes in the real world, names like *Bourbon*, *Florida*, and *Jagger* stir up memories of devastation in the minds of professional SEO's. Each of these are unofficial names of past Google *updates*. Each were known to strike a blow to thousands of web sites that tumbled out of the search results and, as a result, literally ruined many online business models overnight. Be forewarned; a Google update is something to be reckoned with. Allow us to show you the right stuff to help fortify your virtual storefront *before* the storm.

What's an Update?




Search engines are really just big, complicated computer programs and, as such, must be periodically adjusted to stay on the cutting edge of new technology. In fact, if you were to compare today's search engines with those of just a few years ago, it'd be almost like comparing a Digital Video Recorder to an old *Betamax* VCR.

As you would expect, the engines are constantly becoming more sophisticated and, as they do so, their ability to weed out sites that practice index-manipulation (spamming) gets better and better. That means that the engines are constantly raising the bar for *legitimate* ranking strategies too—and this makes it increasingly harder and harder to trick them into an undeserved top ranking.

So how can you be sure to survive the next major update? It's really quite easy: Follow the search engine's guidelines! In other words, if Google (or any of the other search engines) tells you *not* to do something (like join a link farm), then don't! Even if they can't detect a certain type of infraction *now*, and even if you seem to be getting away with it—trust us, one day soon you'll get caught in an update and feel that sinking sensation in the pit of your stomach when you realize your entire site is nowhere to be found in the search results!

That is exactly what happened on November 16th 2003, the month before Christmas and just when the holiday rush was about to begin. It affected thousands of online retailers who were previously entrenched at the top of the listings. They had ordered scads of extra merchandise to meet the brisk demand they anticipated based on the robust sales they had been experiencing for quite some time as a result of their top rankings. And then, in a single few days they lost all of their listings. Some of them never recovered from the financial debacle that ensued after falling out of Google's index at such an inopportune time. *That* was the infamous *Florida* update.

The *Jagger* update, which blew through during October 2005 and lasted into November, snagged a bunch of mini-net sites that were previously ranked well and, once again, poised to profit from the upcoming seasonal rush of holiday sales. However, website owners who heeded our warnings survived the fallout and even *thrived* as a result of Google's changes. These follow-up comments from one of our members who consulted with us says it all...

"I just wanted to give you guys a quick note to let you know you saved my ass. Before the jagger update I did a \$500 consultation session and you strongly urged me to break apart my mini-net. Even though it hurt my rankings I broke it apart, bought some links from review sites, and sent some products in for review (an excellent way to gain a [presell page](#) ). Now that the jagger update is finished I'm slammed to the top of the rankings again!"

Most recently, Google's officially named **Big Daddy** update zapped a bunch of sites in May 2006. This time they targeted webpages with *artificial link structure*, *duplicate content* and *improper redirects* just to name a few of the infractions that got caught in the dragnet that coincided with the latest update.

So, the lesson to grasp from these "Google update" stories is this:

To avoid such rude surprises, you should pay close attention to strategic changes in SEO strategy while planning your site's success for the long haul.







You will be well served to remember the tale of the *tortoise and the hare*. The race is long—and we advise that your search engine ranking strategies reflect that common sense reality.

Next, let's discuss *Sponsored Ads*. Or, what we refer to as, ***Pay-Per-Click Advertising***. Lesson 6 is about "**Demystifying PPC Advertising**". Stay tuned...



Members Section — Advanced Reading

If you're starting to feel like you've learned a LOT already, that's because you have. In fact you probably now know more than you ever expected to learn from a beginner's guide, huh! Well here's some advanced stuff that you're probably ready for. These professional reports will start *icing the cake* of your unfolding SEO education—and begin upstepping you to the professional level!

- [How To Tweak the 10 Most Important On-Page Elements! A Top-Down Approach To Designing High Ranking Web Pages.](#) 
- [How to Create Content, Build Links and Increase Search Rankings by Marketing with the Digg Effect — Learn how to get 1000 links in the same time most people spend getting 10!](#) 
- [How to Avoid The Google Sandbox](#) 
- [How To Avoid Getting Banned By Google!](#) 
- [How to Benefit from Webpage Profiling So You Can Laugh at Google's Next Search Engine Update](#) 
- [Google Reveals Ranking Components in Patent Application! ...illuminating their secret sauce for top rankings](#) 

Lesson Six of Seven

Demystifying PPC Advertising

Remember those *Sponsored Ads* we mentioned way back in Lesson Two? Well, those are what we call **pay-per-click (PPC)** listings.

In this tutorial, we'll cover...

- [What about Pay-per-click?](#)
- [The ABC's of Using Pay-Per-Click Ads](#)
- [Pay-Per-Click Listings versus Free Listings](#)
- [How to Avoid Losing a LOT of Money With PPC](#)
- **Members Section** – [Advanced Reading Suggestions](#)



What about Pay-Per-Click?

Sponsored Ads, aka *pay-per-click (PPC)* listings, are the fastest way to present your web page links to a targeted consumer market that is searching for your product or service via keywords on the search engines. And, as the name implies, you must *pay* for the privilege.

If you think of search engines as an online version of a world-wide yellow pages, then pay-per-click would be compared to those big ads that some companies buy to appear within their business category. **Google AdWords**, **Yahoo Sponsored Search**, and **Microsoft adCenter** all offer some form of pay-per-click advertising that guarantees your web page will be prominently displayed on *page one* of the search results.

The ABC's of Using Pay-Per-Click Ads

The concept behind pay-per-click is pretty simple:

1. Write an ad,
2. List the keywords for which you want your page's link to be displayed in the search results,
3. Then tell the engines how much you are willing to pay for each click your ad generates.

For example, you may write an ad for your vintage dolls site that looks something like the example on the right.

Vintage & Antique Dolls Best prices on antique dolls from France & Germany. www.vintage-dolls.com

Next, you choose a set of keywords for which this ad will appear (such as **german dolls**, **vintage dolls**, **bisque dolls** and so on). Finally, you agree to pay something like 12¢ every time someone clicks your ad. Let's suppose the next highest bid for the keyword **vintage dolls** is 11¢ per click. Then, because *you* are the high bidder, your ad will appear at the top of the pay-per-click results every time someone searches for that phrase until either *your account runs out of money* or *a competitor outbids you*.

Introducing the Pay-Per-Click players

The three major search engines—Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft Live—all offer pay-per-click advertising programs. The basic concept is the same but you will find there are differences in their terms, services, displays, and affiliate partnerships.

Google's version of pay-per-click, called *AdWords*, is displayed at the *top* and *right-hand side* of the search results page. Yahoo's version, *Yahoo Sponsored Search*, appears at the *top*, the *right-hand side*, and the *bottom* of Yahoo's search results. Both engines also partner with a host of affiliate sites that also display ads (*and earn a commission each time they are clicked*). To learn more about where your ads will appear, how they are managed, and how you can calculate your cost-per-click, you can visit Google AdWords and Yahoo Sponsored Search by following the links below.



<https://adwords.google.com/select/>



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

What about Microsoft?

Microsoft's *adCenter* pay-per-click services are the new kid on the block and can cost you less to get started. Of course one of the reasons is that *adCenter* sends a lot less traffic than Google and Yahoo's pay-per-click services. Regardless, by starting out with Microsoft's *adCenter* you can find out which keywords pull in the best traffic before you move your campaign over to Google or Yahoo.



<https://adcenter.microsoft.com/>

Pay-Per-Click Listings versus Free Listings

Obviously, pay-per-click is a fast, guaranteed way to show up in the search results for keywords that you handpick. No waiting around and no SEO required. However, since it isn't free, you must decide which is more cost-effective for your business: an organic listing in the free search results (which, of course requires some time and effort), or an instant listing in an alternative section of *page-one-search-results* that you purchased. What's best? ...read on.

It's important to know that we're presenting a simplistic example of pay-per-click in this beginners guide. When put into practice, it's more complicated. The fact is that pay-per-click ad campaigns require a greater degree of hands-on management than pages optimized for the free results.

For instance, you must not only choose the right keywords, you must also write ads and continuously test them while diligently monitoring your ad-campaign's results in order to avoid

paying too much for your clicks. **More than one business owner has been surprised to learn their account got whacked with a monster \$\$ charge before they made even a single sale!! So, be *very* careful.**

However, the fact remains that, once you've mastered the strategies and techniques, you can instantly secure a top listing that leads to a steady flow of traffic and profits. Surprisingly, some businesses rely almost entirely on pay-per-click *Sponsored Ads* for their customer traffic and revenue streams.

But, more often than not, successful online businesses balance their marketing strategy with a mix of...

well-optimized web pages that target the free listings

working in tandem with...

an effective, well-tested, & monitored pay-per-click campaign.

It's common practice to use pay-per-click *Sponsored Ads* to drive traffic to a page with the intention of **testing** that page's *marketing copy* and *conversion-to-sales* ratio. Many times, once the testing is completed and the site owner **knows** which presentation produces the highest ratio of sales, an expensive pay-per-click campaign is suspended in favor of the free listings which utilize the winning elements of the product presentation based on what was learned in the pay-per-click testing phase.

This is especially true when the free listings are scoring high in the search results. Even more so if the pay-per-click campaign was functioning at only break-even or resulting in a loss. Remember, your first objective is to **test**—and pay-per-click is one sure fire way to quickly drive results to a page so that important page elements (like headlines, body copy, order forms, bonuses, and so forth) can be quickly tested for sales effectiveness. If, in the beginning your pay-per-click ads are showing a profit too, then all the better!

Naturally, when you're starting out with a new site, it's realistic to expect that you'll be periodically shifting the focus of your efforts back and forth between pay-per-click and free results. That's because you'll be optimizing your pages, and then applying the element of time while you wait for your pages to be found and then ranked in the free search results. It will take a while before you know enough to ultimately strike that perfect balance that results in a steady stream of profitable traffic to your site (and then you can make money while you sleep!).

How to Avoid Losing A LOT of Money with Pay-per-click

When first embarking on your pay-per-click adventures. Go slowly! Proceed carefully! Remember that, unless you place spending limits on your campaign, a bad selection of keywords can literally drain your ad-budget overnight—a jolting shock for any business owner and a nightmare for some.

Your best defense against your wallet being hijacked is *education*. *Worth repeating is the caution we previously issued above;*



Warning: More than one business owner has been surprised to learn their account got whacked with a monster \$\$ charge before they made even a single sale!! So, be *very* careful.

Start with a modest ad budget—one that you can afford to invest. And remember that, in the beginning, your main objective should be to drive traffic to your pages so you can test elements of your sales presentation. Your goal is to learn which sales elements that buyers respond to with clicks, enrollments, inquiries and purchases.

Stay tuned for Lesson 7- "**SEO Review and Onward**" We'll review the *Top 10 Points of Basic SEO*.



Members Section — Advanced Reading

As you can see, there are both benefits and pitfalls associated with using PPC advertising. The following reports are geared toward getting you started on the right foot toward making profits without getting burned.

- 🔍 [How To Avoid Paying The Higher Click-Costs Caused by Google's New Landing-Page Quality Assessments!](#) 📄
- 🔍 [The Complete Guide to Getting Started with Pay Per Click Search Engines. Here's a Side-by-Side Comparison of AdWords, Yahoo Sponsored Search, & Microsoft's adCenter](#) 📄

Lesson Seven of Seven

SEO Review and Onward

Congratulations!

If you have completed all seven lessons then you are well on your way to becoming an SEO intermediate. You are certainly ready to move to our award winning, best selling **advanced SEO book**, [*The UnFair Advantage Book on Winning The Search Engine Wars*](#)

(Click the link above when your ready to the download the book).

Let's spend a moment and reflect on how much knowledge you've gained by reviewing the *top ten points* to remember...



Review — Top Ten Points of Basic SEO

1. **Links are the most important element of Search engine optimization.** Links tell the search engines how popular your site is. From the search engine point of view (SEPOV), popular sites are *important* sites—and important sites rank higher. Therefore you should **collect lots of inbound links.**
2. **Keep it natural.** It's important that your links look natural to the search engines—these are the *good links* we discussed. Actively collect links, but be sure to **create a natural-looking link structure by focusing your efforts on good links while avoiding the bad ones that make your link structure look artificial.**
3. **Get your keywords into your links!** Keywords within the anchor text of inbound links tell the search engines what your page is *about*. Do whatever you must to get your keywords into the **anchor text** of your inbound links. And remember to vary your anchor text so that your inbound links are *not* identical.
4. **Place keywords strategically within your pages.** The keywords located on your web pages *also* tell the search engines what your page and site is *about*. Target only a few keywords (or keyphrases) per web page and limit your pages to fairly small file sizes (under 101k). The more pages, the better. Search engines like web sites with lots of web pages containing unique and valuable content.
5. **Always use your most important keyphrase in your <title> tag.** Your title tag is the *first* place search engines look for keywords and they often use this title tag as your description in association with the link to your page. The better your description, the more clicks your link will get. Remember that every page on your site should have its own unique, keyword-optimized <title> tag.
6. **Use a site map** so the search engine's spiders can easily find all of your pages and index them. Remember that the site map is really for spiders, not necessarily people. Therefore, *simple* is better. The more complex your site map, the more unfriendly the page from the search engine spider's point of view.
7. **Follow the rules.** We assume you are creating a site and building an online business that you want to last. Therefore, pay attention to all of the search engines' webmaster

guidelines. And remember that any 'trick' you get away with now will likely come back to bite you when the next search engine update comes around!

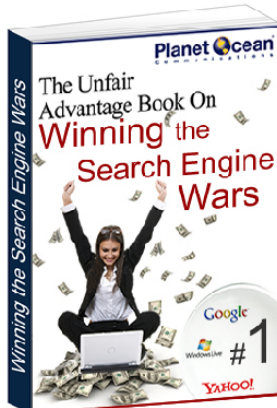
8. **Use Pay-Per-Click campaigns for testing** the mechanical components of your site, your sales presentations, shopping cart, enrollment and inquiry systems. While you are waiting for the search engines to find, index, and rank your site, pay-per-click advertising can become a source of traffic that helps you *quickly* determine what works and what doesn't.
9. **Be forewarned** that a pay-per-click ad campaign can be needlessly expensive if you fail to diligently monitor your *spend* budget and track your results. Start slowly! Proceed carefully! Learn the ropes thoroughly before you proceed at full speed ahead.
10. **Continue your education.** Remember that SEO is a dynamic marketing system that is constantly innovating new solutions to meet the challenges of doing business online. These lessons have put you on solid footing where you are ready to enter the mainstream. And, as a SearchEngineNews.com member you'll be kept up to date with the month to month changes giving you that 'Unfair Advantage' that keeps you ranked ahead of your competition.

By the way, it's a great feeling to know we've helped you get started—and you've come a long way. Thanks for this opportunity to *serve*. We, at Planet Ocean, wish you the very best with your online endeavors.



Sincerely, from your authors and teachers,

Stephen Mahaney — President / Editor / SEO
Esoos Bobnar — Research Specialist / SEO
SearchEngineNews.com



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