

## **THE ART OF SEO LINK BUILDING IS FINALLY GETTING INTERSTING**

This white paper has been prepared by Tug. Tug, is a Search Engine Marketing specialist agency, based in Shoreditch, London.

Search Engines have evolved into a new consumer, communications and marketing channel; with Google only serving around 196M number of searches a day in the UK.

In fact, 9 out of 10 internet surfers use a Search Engine to start their internet journey. Therefore, if your website doesn't have visibility in the engines, you are missing significant volumes of traffic.

### **What is Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)?**

Search engine optimisation, or SEO as it's commonly known as, is an online marketing strategy that involves designing, writing and coding your entire website with the intention of enabling search engines to index your site easily and efficiently. The sole aim and objective is for it to rank higher for keywords relevant to your business. Optimising a website and building link equity, are critical to gaining visibility on the organic or natural (left hand side) of a search engine results page (SERP).

### **Two Parts to SEO: On Page Optimisation and Off Page Optimisation**

SEO, is done in two stages, known primarily as on page and off page. On page involves the website itself and fundamentally evolves around the design, build and copy laid out within the actual site. Off page relates to building link equity for your site through what is referred to as, Link Building. The latter is basically about gaining 3<sup>rd</sup> party exposure of your website. Both activities are necessary to improve a site's position in the engines' Natural Listings, for relevant searches.

### **Two Types of Link Building: Passive and Active**

#### **Passive Linking**

Traditional link building to create 3<sup>rd</sup> party exposure and to build link equity has concentrated on passive linking. We define passive linking as the creation of links that will passively stay linked to your site, waiting for a spider to index them. This includes paid link directories and reciprocal linking. With a new website one should still always start by laying a foundation of links within general and vertical specific directories. The next step would be to develop a base of article submissions, using white papers or PR stories. However the next step in your link building strategy has become much more interesting as there are so many valuable new ways to link build such as active link building.

#### **Active Linking**

Active link building is creating links that could spawn the creation of new links through active human interaction. Leaving comments on a relevant industry blog with a link back to a pertinent white paper on your site would be an innovative way to drive engine spiders as well as humans (consumers or expert influencers) to your website. Many forums allow links back to your site within conversations. Keeping the conversation going on several forums and blogs with a good Page Rank is a great way to practice active link building. An industry has also sprung up around the creation of Facebook and Myspace profiles. If kept up to date with relevant, rich content and value add links back to your site, this is another strong form of active linking.

## **Link Building is getting more Creative due to the coming of Universal Search**

Google has been experimenting with the look of its results page as well as the types of results it provides for a specific search. The next version of Google will look a bit like the latest version of [www.ask.com](http://www.ask.com). Go check it out. When you type in 'Fraggle Rock' it not only lists relevant websites, but images of the children's television show characters as well as other interesting narrower searches and other related children's TV shows.

Google calls it Universal Search. In the not too distant future when you search for Madonna you will be served listings of Madonna sites, Madonna photos, links to buy Madonna tracks, latest news articles about Madonna, you tube videos of Madonna - all served on the same Google SERP. This is why link building has become more interesting over the last 18 months.

Google is up weighting the value of new forms of links as they index not only websites but all the available content, videos, music, images, news etc. that they will need to populate their new Universal Search SERPs.

Submitting rich videos with the correct file description, to video directories can have a great effect on your link building results. You can also place images, which are named in relation to your meta and with links back to your site, on photo sharing sites. Fresh news also has a high value as Google prepares for Universal Search. And of course up to date blogs, forums and web 2.0 sites are high on Google's list of content providers for their new SERPs – therefore active links from these sites are very valuable in the newly invigorated world of link building.

For examples of Active and Passive link building please see the case study below of a successful ongoing campaign developed and managed by Tug's team of SEO professionals.

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