

The Black Hat eBook

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Please respect that you have paid very little money to share years of webmastering experience that can definitely be used to your great advantage whether by choosing to engage in Black, Gray or White Hat SEO.

Not only am I going to tell you all the dirty black hat SEO techniques, I am going to do something that no other black hat webmaster has done !! I am going to PROVE that they work by giving you the URL of an old black hat website of mine which is now de-indexed, but was riding high undetected in search engines for over 2 years, and by proving the stats by giving you access to the hit counter !

Negative SEO - All the Negative SEO techniques detailed in this eBook are in brackets.

During the past 10 years I have constantly made a living out of the Internet by employing Black, Gray and White Hat Seo techniques and you can too if you just follow the simple guidelines in the eBook.

Please don't be too impatient to get to the real Black Hat stuff and do read through the entire eBook instead of just skipping through looking for the meaty bits, because even though it may sound quite basic at first and even if you are an experienced webmaster I am sure you will learn something more.

Search Engines – Basics

Black Hat SEO techniques are those methods used to build a website and to get a website ranked in SERPS (Search Engine Results Pages) which are deemed to be cheating, sly, spammy and underhand, often breaking search engine guidelines. White Hat SEO techniques are those techniques used to build and promote a website which are above board, honest and right, play within the rules and try to follow all the search engine guidelines. Gray Hat SEO is the gray area in the middle.

Search engines rank websites mainly on how important they consider that website to be, especially in relation to the keyword search. EG If you search Google for "viagra" you will get over 40 Million results, meaning that there are 40 million webpages containing the word "viagra".

Now the job of the search engine is to deliver to the surfer those results ranked from 1 to 40 million with the site at number 1, in first place, being the site that it deems the most important.

The search engines judge the importance of a website using an algorithm of the following factors :-

a) Content and Size

The amount of unique content on the entire website and exact page related to that keyword searched upon.

Search engines will give importance to websites which have deep keyword matches - EG If you have a 3 page website trying to sell viagra, and your competitor has a 1000 page website, then for that reason alone his website is deemed more important - (assuming both websites were employing White Hat SEO techniques) this is because the search engine has noticed the keyword "viagra" is mentioned on your website about 25 times, whereas is it mentioned thousands of times on your competitors website, legitimately and without breaking keyword spam thresholds. (The amount of times a search engine deems the

repeating of keyword as spam, in most instances more than 7%). Also because of the size of the competitors website they would have more natural internal links, probably relating to that keyword which is also taken into account.

b) Popularity

The amount of times that website is mentioned on the Internet - mentioned meaning how many other websites hyperlink to it - and also it takes into consideration the keywords in the hyperlink, the surrounding text around the hyperlink, the text in the URL of the linking page, the theme of the website, the number of other outgoing links on that page and the ranking of the page that displays the hyperlink.

Google ranks pages on a scale of 0-10 with 10 being the highest.

So its not just about the amount of links it's also about the importance of those links - you could get hundreds of links on zero or low ranked pages, which have content that has no relation to your keywords, this may help your website crawl up search engine result pages for some keywords, but you could achieve a much better result with just a handful of high quality links on websites which are related to yours.

The Importance of Higher SERPS Positioning

Web statistics show that 99% of the time a search engine visitor only looks at the FIRST PAGE of results and from the first page of results they are more than likely to click on the result at the top, in FIRST PLACE.

Internet statisticians estimate that from most given searches the searcher would click the results as following, from the first ten results displayed by the search engine.

No.1 68%

No.2 37%

No.3 26%
No.4 23%
No.5 13%
No.6. 9%
No.7 6%
No.8 3%
No.9 2%
No.10 less than 1%

The reason this does not total 100% is that searchers will look at more than one listing.

So obviously the difference between coming up first and coming up second in search results is huge, at least double in most cases, meaning double the amount of traffic and double the amount of sales. This is why it is so important to get to the top of the pile, to get FIRST PLACE. If you can achieve first place for popular keywords or keyword phrases then it would be very lucrative indeed. However, lets face it – it's never going to happen. All those really competitive keywords are virtually owned by big business, and no matter how black or white we try we will never be able to compete.

What we can do though is get onto the first page of SERPS and in many cases in first place for many obscure phrases and semi-competitive phrases that relate to our website. We can do this by making webpages optimized for these lesser competitive search phrases.

SEO - Search Engine Optimization - The Basics

To optimize just means to make the best out of your website or webpage, in particular how it is seen by a search engine.

Nowadays there are absolutely thousands of SEO Companies.

"SEO is not brain surgery", SEO is so easy a 5 year old kid can do it with one hand, while watching TV and picking his nose. There is no Degree in SEO, and not even a basic qualification, yet these days many people are starting their own SEO Company, with just

a basic knowledge of the Internet, because so many people think that they need SEO, meaning plenty of rich pickings for these cowboys. You will be surprised as what little work these people do and how easy it is to do for yourself, these people are not doctors or lawyers, have no qualifications and yet demand extortionate fees.

Take a look around all the SEO company's websites and see the crazy prices they are charging. Optimizing is just one cog in the wheel of success on the Internet, and a very very small one at that.

If you are white hat, then providing you have a good website full of genuine content and you have your keywords repeated throughout without spamming, then you can see optimizing as just fine tuning. Basically I can tell you what an SEO company does in one sentence. They just look at the page, decide which keywords it should be ranking for by using a keyword tool, then strategically place keywords a few times at intervals on the page, then they find places around the Internet to put a link to your site, usually free directories.....Its as simple as that !

There are one or two lesser important things as well such as making sure you have your HTML Meta Tags for the page Description and Keywords and having any images tagged, known as ALT TEXT, however even though I would still do these out of habit they are not necessary.

What is necessary above all, is knowing what keywords you want each page to be ranked for. First of all you must decide which keywords or keyword phrases you want surfers to be able to find your website or an individual page by, when using a search engine. If you are unsure then look at the content of the page, what is the point and meaning. If you want to reverse engineer and look for the most common search phrases made from a particular keyword then you can use a keyword tool such as

<http://www.enteryourkeyword.com>

or <http://inventory.overture.com>

For example if your website was about viagra then go to one of the keyword tool websites above and type in "viagra" and you will be presented with thousands of related search queries.

You will see that maybe the word viagra has 1 million searches per month, then next would be "generic viagra", then "buy viagra" etc..right down to more obscure keyword phrases such as "where can I buy viagra in new york"

To optimize a page for a certain keyword or keyword phrase would mean making sure that throughout the text on that page you would have that phrase repeated several times.. however we need to make sure that the phrase is not repeated too much as this would be seen by the search engines as keyword stuffing or spam. This is why I always advise to have between 500-1000 words on each page, because the more text there is on a webpage then the more times you can place your keywords and keyword phrases without it being seen as spam.

As a general rule I would make sure my keywords were not repeated more than 7% of the time.

Also with some search engines, they will also put greater emphasis on text which is bigger..underlined or bold. Also more emphasis is given to any text which is used in internal hyperlinks or anchors.

However no amount of page optimization can get your site high in the search engines, it's just a small cog in the engine.

But assuming you have done some keyword research, your webpages are optimized and your site has no internal problems - such as all the pages are in your site map, (they are accessible by clicking through your site from the homepage) there are no problems with your programming or hosting etc,, then you can now get on with promoting your site.

Website Promotion The First Step

Submitting Your Website to Search Engines

Many people have been astounded at my response about submitting your website to search engines. Because my advice is DON'T BOTHER !! Yes, it's a waste of time. You don't need to submit your website to any of the main search engines or the bulk of the other search engines... they will find it naturally.

Webmasters assume that they must submit their website to all the hundreds.. if not thousands of search engines if they are to have any success. WRONG ! This is preyed upon by many web companies promising to "Submit your site to thousands of search engines for \$30" etc.

If your website has a handful of incoming links from other websites then any search engine worth its salt will spider your website after finding it from these links, without you having to manually go to the search engines submission page, and more importantly without you having to pay some company to do it for you.

So the quickest and easiest way to get your website indexed and listed by search engines is just to put up a few links to your website on some half decent ranked pages. Your website can be indexed within 24 hours if you can manage to get just one good incoming link.

1 Link on any page ranked 5 or more - spidered and indexed within 24 hours.

2 links on any page ranked 4 or more - 48 hours

4 Links on any page ranked 3 or more – 96 hours

Black Hat & White Hat SEO Techniques

Using White Hat SEO techniques to get ranked in SERPS involves :-

- 1) Building a website with unique content and images.
- 2) Trading links fairly.
- 3) Getting your website listed in directories or on other websites with related content.

Using Black Hat SEO techniques to get ranked in SERPS involves such practices such as :-

- 1) Linkspamming.
- 2) Building thousands of computer generated pages / doorway pages Also known as Scraping, Data Mining, Scraper Sites, Automated Directories.
- 3) Misrepresenting Content.
- 4) Buying links.
- 5) Link Farming.
- 6) Redirects & Hijacking SERPS.
- 7) Cheating on reciprocal links.
- 8) Empire Building.
- 9) Cloaking.
- 10) Linkbaiting.
- 11) Spamdexing.
- 12) Buying Traffic.
- 13) Attacking Competitors Websites.

Now lets look into the techniques in detail starting with White Hat SEO.

- 1) Building a website with unique content and images.

This involves making an information packed, user friendly website full of information such as articles, pictures, videos, a blog, chatroom etc.

If the content is unique (can only be found on your website), then this also holds extra importance.

Unique content is content found only on one website - if you have content on your website that only appears on that website and nowhere else on the Internet then it is classed as unique content.

Nowadays there are far too many websites set up which have been automated to receive repeat content and articles, scraped content, affiliate content and advertising banners, as in the form of RSS feeds, news feeds, weather, horoscopes, time and date, games, java applets, HTML add ons etc... and just plain use of authorized uncopyrighted material.

Therefore search engine algorithms have developed to give much more importance to websites that have unique content.

If you are using White Hat SEO then the bigger your website is (the more unique content you have), then the higher it will rank in SERPS and the more traffic you will get because you have many text keywords which can match search engine queries. You will also naturally have many internal hyperlinking keywords.

2) Trading links fairly.

This would involve making your own link exchange contacts, contacting other websites, surfing for other websites that have the same or a similar theme to yours - EG For a viagra website you could exchange links with other pharmaceutical websites, health websites, men's websites etc... It also involves regularly checking the links to ensure both parties are adhering to the deal and that the site you are trading with is not cheating on reciprocal links (see Black Hat 7).

Ideally the description for the link should be different everytime - showing the search engines that the link has been generated by hand and is unique. However, the actual hyperlink text itself can be your main keywords.

EG [.Viagra Shop](http://www.viagraxxxx.com) <-(hyperlinks to the website www.viagraxxxx.com)

Your online pharmacy for buying viagra on the Internet.

Now the phrase Viagra Shop will be given a greater significance by search engines, this is known as the anchor text, and the words that come after this, known as the description, will also be given some lesser significance. So if you are particularly trying to rank a website high in SERPS for a particular keyword or keyword phrase then you use this phrase as often as you can in your hyperlink text in any links you post, including any internal links within your website.

Of course, your website may not only sell one product, or want to concentrate on one keyword phrase alone, so for links that you want to internal pages with other themes then you use an entirely different link text and description relating to that page.

3) Getting your website listed in directories or on other websites with related content.

Search engines do not put as much importance on reciprocal links - they can see that your site links to a site which in turn links back – and they see this as both websites scratching each others backs, and as an attempt to manipulate SERPS, especially if your link is being featured on many non related pages, e.g. you are trading links with just about anybody, instead of related websites.

Therefore getting other websites to link to you, without you reciprocating the link is much more important. Obviously if you have stuff which is free, or funny or entertaining, or your website is very useful or informative then other surfers may link to your site from forum posts or from their own websites or homepages, this is probably the best benefit of White Hat.

However White Hatters cannot rely on such links alone, so they would also find places where they are able to list their site that gives them a prestigious one way link, such as contacting other

websites, legitimately telling others about their site in a non spammy way on related forums and blogs, and finding directories which may list the website.

This would involve surfing for sites in the same genre and contacting them telling them about their site in the hope that they may list it as a useful resource for their users - issuing press releases – there are many press release services available – some are even free, surfing the Internet for honest directories (directories which don't cheat you out of a HTML link, more about this under Black Hat 7) which may list your site - EG Viagra would be health directories, pharmaceutical directories etc, or getting listed in larger directories that cover your theme - EG www.yahoo.com/directory/health/sexualhealth/products/viagra.

Some directories list websites for free, if they consider the content to be useful to its users, others may want just a reciprocal link, meaning the link will not be a prestigious one-way link, and others will want a payment to list a site.

Also issuing press releases can involve costs, because many of the free press release companies won't include a hyperlink unless you choose the paid option.

Using white hat SEO does not involve buying links of any form. Buying links is now considered by Google as a violation of their guidelines and an attempt to manipulate SERPS.

Quote from Google

"Google and most other search engines use links to determine reputation. A site's ranking in Google search results is partly based on analysis of those sites that link to it. Link-based analysis is an extremely useful way of measuring a site's value, and has greatly improved the quality of web search. Both the quantity and, more importantly, the quality of links count towards this rating. However, some SEOs and webmasters engage in the practice of buying and selling links that pass PageRank,

disregarding the quality of the links, the sources, and the long-term impact it will have on their sites. Buying or selling links that pass PageRank is in violation of Google's webmaster guidelines and can negatively impact a site's ranking in search results. Not all paid links violate our guidelines. Buying and selling links is a normal part of the economy of the web when done for advertising purposes, and not for manipulation of search results. Links purchased for advertising should be designated as such. This can be done in several ways, such as: Adding a rel="nofollow" attribute to the <a> tag Redirecting the links to an intermediate page that is blocked from search engines with a robots.txt file Google works hard to ensure that it fully discounts links intended to manipulate search engine results, such excessive link exchanges and purchased links that pass PageRank. If you see a site that is buying or selling links that pass PageRank, let us know. We'll use your information to improve our algorithmic detection of such links."

So basically this means that if you buy any links at all which are HTML links direct to your website then you are in violation of Googles guidelines.

Now lets look into the techniques in detail using Black Hat SEO.

1) Linkspamming.

This is the heart of Black Hat SEO, obviously because getting links to your website using White Hat SEO can take such a long time, and a great deal of effort.

Obviously because of the low importance of reciprocal links then the Black Hatter wants one-way links. Therefore posting to forums, blogs and guestbooks, those ones that allow you to leave a hyperlink are the easiest and fastest ways to get one-way links. Also by finding other vulnerable places which allow you to leave a link.

This is done in a variety of ways, depending on how much time and effort you want to put in. Forums and blogs which require you to join can be time consuming, as you have to fill out forms and confirm your E-mail address, also these forums tend to be spam intolerant, so you can't just put a quick posting like "Buy Viagra - check out this viagra website and buy online" ..with the words "Buy Viagra" being a hyperlink to your website.

However these forums tend to be very active and have a higher ranking than forums which require no membership login, plus you can be assured that the forum won't turn to a spamboard which would water down the importance of your link, so it can pay to use some membership forums, however this would mean finding a way of linking to your website without it looking like spam, you can do this by linking to your website as part of your signature - a block of text you leave behind every time you post a message.

However you would still have to be imaginative as to the actual content of your posting - EG you can't just reply to someone and say "Yes I agree, nice one mate." lots of times in the forum, leaving your signature behind.

Forum administrators will see this as spam. It's also beneficial if you can mention related keywords within the text of your posting - you have to be very creative. You would have to make some effort to read what the posting was about and come up with a few quick sentences, making it look like you are actively involved in the conversation, ensuring that it won't be seen as spam.

However, when using this method do not post many times in the same day on the same forum - keep the details of your username and password and visit every couple of days and reply to a couple of posts - although this is not entirely Black Hat - its a kind of Gray Hat.

Complete Black Hat techniques are now becoming outdated because they are easy to spot by search engine algorithms. Also many forums and boards that are very tolerant become full of

spam links and your link becomes completely worthless because it ends up being on a page with hundreds of other links.

This is why we have to evolve with the search engines and we have to become more gray hat. Even though its similar to what a white hat would do. He would find a nice forum and put up a related posting that is well thought out. However as a gray hat, we would not spend hours writing a reply or going into too much detail, we just want the comment good enough to pass the forums moderators, and our main concern is to mention as many related keywords as possible without it looking like spam.

When you are not able to use a signature or when posting in forums where you have to make a certain amount of posts before hyperlinks are allowed in your signature, then you would have to be very constructive in order to put a hyperlink in your posting without it looking like spam. Basically this depends on the theme of your site, links to things like drugs, gambling and pornography will almost certainly be deleted - even if part of your signature. The guys that run these forums are not stupid, they have been bombarded by spam for years - they know all the tricks and are fighting back.

Getting links in these membership forums can be lucrative - especially when the forum has the same theme as your site, however this can be time consuming also.

Also if you find a forum where you are allowed to leave a hyperlink in your signature then don't post hundreds of messages, because you will be leaving the identical anchor text and description and search engines see this as spam, so just leave about a half dozen postings at the most and find another forum.

Another way is to find blogs and forums where no membership is required - meaning you can just instantly add your message - and get an instant link to your site. You can find these types of forums in a number of ways - using a search for things like. "posted by guest", "posted by anonymous", forum "you do not have to

register to post", forum "you don't have to register to post", "guest posting allowed", "you may need to refresh the page", "guest posting allowed", "anonymous posting allowed"

To ensure a content related link, then you would add your related keywords EG "viagra" "posted by guest", this means the page already contains your keyword and therefore getting your link on that page holds more importance.

You may find that you come across many forums that are full of comments spam already.. getting your link on these pages not only may be useless because of the number of links already there, but can also have a negative effect on the ranking of the website posted here. So you have to avoid pages which have become "dead forums" or "spamboards", or are starting to fill up with spam and will become dead in the near future - because having a link there could count against you - especially when your link is on many other dead forums. So if you already see that the forum is not being moderated, and see lots of postings for drugs, porn and gambling then its best to move on and find somewhere else.

You have to learn by these forums what you may or may not get away with - even these forums where you don't have to register are regulated and won't tolerate spam - so again it's best to read quickly and try to post something constructive - don't make it look like you just want a link. The more effort put into the posting then the less likely it will be deleted. Your main aim is to get a hyperlink to your website and to have some related keywords within your text.

For example - if you have a website selling Digital Cameras and find a posting on a related forum that reads :-

Posting From Fred

Hey guys. I'm currently on the market looking for a new digital camera to replace my Nikon Coolpix. My experience with Nikon

wasn't one that was enjoyable and I'm sorry to say I most likely will never own a Nikon again. A few of my friends have Canon Powershots and those cameras appear to be so much better in every attribute. I originally was going to get a Canon Powershot 450 (5MP), but I decided to hold off when my father mentioned Olympus and their cameras. Their "Stylus" series is what competes with Canon's "Powershot" series, I believe. The Stylus I was also considering was the 710 (7.1MP). I can get it cheaper than the Canon, but it has 7.1MP? Now...I don't know where to run. Which camera is the better camera for my money? Now, I'm more interested in picture quality than features and such. I want something small, fast, with great picture quality. Which do you recommend and why? Fred

Your Quick but Constructive Reply (Example reply for membership forums where a signature is allowed)

Hi Fred, personally I would always go for resolution, I think the 7.1 mega pixels Olympus Stylus is awesome !!

Digital Cameras

Cheap Digital Cameras

Signature Hyperlink linking to your camera website.

Where the signature is not allowed but you are allowed to leave a link then don't use your name, use a main keyword related to your website, but without making it obvious that you are spamming..Calling yourself something like "Digital Camera Guy" and leaving your link as www.yourcamerawebsite.com would result in the forum hyperlinking your name to your website.. meaning search engines will strongly associate the keywords digital and camera with your website.

Now because on that page certain keywords that relate to your site are also displayed, such as Canon, Nikon, Olympus, digital,

camera, mega pixels etc - then this is a perfect one-way link. This is important because these keywords may be on your website - and are keywords or combinations thereof, that you want people to be able to type into a search engine to find your website.

ALL the words on EVERY page where a link to your website is posted are taken into consideration by the search engines, with the words in the near vicinity to your link having a greater importance and the words in the hyperlink text having an even greater importance, and those words which consistently appear on pages where your links are, also become strongly associated with your website.

All these words are taken into account by search engines when those words are searched for, EVEN when those words are not mentioned on your site. At this stage don't become too obsessed by the ranking of the page - because most new forum pages don't have any ranking assigned to them - but you can rest assured - especially in popular forums - and forums that have a high ranking homepage - that in the future this page will have a decent ranking, and your one way targeted link will be very lucrative.

However in forums where they do not allow a signature or a link then you have to be more constructive in order to leave your link without it looking like spam. Sometimes you can get away with it by just replying as above and leaving the link, but many forum administrators will see this as spam, and they will mostly get deleted after a few days. Most forum administrators working on forums that don't allow a direct link will only authorize links which they feel are genuinely related to the topic, so you may have to be more constructive EG

Hi Fred, personally I would always go for resolution, I think the 7.1 mega pixels Olympus Stylus is awesome !! If you still cannot make your mind up, then have a look here [Digital Cameras](http://www.yourcamerawebsite.com) (hyperlink to www.yourcamerawebsite.com), because they have

detailed lists of all the specifications on both cameras as well as customer reviews.

Now this type of link should not be seen as spam. Now depending on the type of forum, displaying your hyperlink in your post may be done in a variety of ways. Sometimes they will only allow parsing of a URL address, so if a URL is typed anywhere in the posting then it will be converted to a hyperlink. If the forum allows bb code then you will have to use that to display your link
EG

```
[url=http://www.youcamerawebsite.com/]Digital Cameras[/url]
```

If the forum allows HTML code then you can leave a HTML hyperlink
EG `Digital Cameras `

When you are unsure which type of coding is allowed then put in all three and use the "Preview" to see which one works - and then edit your post to work with the correct method.

Now, if you are promoting a drugs, porn or gambling website then you may find it particularly hard for any of your links to stick and to find pages with related content that have not turned into dead forums. For these sites you just have to run the Google gauntlet and the only way you can have any success without paying out vast amounts of money on links, is to spam.

But make sure you have many projects on the go, all at the same time, and as soon as one website gets de-indexed then make another. This is one reason why I don't particularly like to be involved with these kind of sites, because they can have a short life span, and you are constantly putting up links and having sites de-indexed and making new sites. Whereas if your site is not drugs, porn or gambling then you can be more constructive with your comments and they can stick and give you links which last

for years, meaning your website can bring in a steady income so long as you keep topping up a few links every week.

Forum Owners Fighting Spam

Now, there is a new weapon that blog and forum owners are using to combat forum spammers and that is the >no follow tag. Using the >no follow tag in the HTML with the hyperlink effectively tells the search engines that the link should not be followed / can not be trusted or is a paid link for the purposes of only generating traffic to that site and not for manipulating Page rank. EG

```
<a href="http://www.mycamerawebsite.com/"  
rel="nofollow">Viagra</a>
```

At first I thought that there was absolutely no benefit in posting your link on a forum that used the no follow tag – however this is completely untrue. It's true that the actual link on the page that uses the no follow tag is useless, however you can still get an incoming link via your profile. When you make a posting then your name is displayed and is linked to your profile. In your profile you can list your 'homepage' and this link in most cases does not use the no follow attribute ! So even though you will not be getting a direct link, there will still be some link juice to your profile page, which in turn passes the juice to your website.

Also another thing to take into consideration, if you are posting a lot of spam, is your I.P. number. Many forums are used by the same software, EG Typekey, Wordpress etc. and some of these software companies connect all those forums using its software to a main frame - where an I.P. number is logged. So when the main frame sees the same I.P. number continually posting links and promoting the same website then it logs this as spam.

Your I.P. number will then be blacklisted from posting on any of their forums, also they may contact all forum owners using its software and notify them of your I.P. number, and the forum

owner sometimes only has to click one button to delete all of your posts. So for people who are doing a lot of linkspamming then I would recommend using a dial-up connection where your I.P. number changes every time you log on..such as AOL. or using a proxy server or anonymous server.

Posting in Guest Books is also another way of getting free one-way links. Again, this method worked wonders in the past but is now virtually defunct. Search engines are placing very little - or no importance on guest book entries - and sites with lots of links in guestbooks can be penalized. At the very most post only a few dozen links in guestbooks, so be very choosy and select only guestbooks where your link will be displayed on a decent ranked page 3 or more.

Free Directories

Another way of getting free links to your website is by submitting it to a free directory. There are thousands of directories that will accept your website for review and if they think it's acceptable then they will list it for free.

Directory Submission Services.

Recently a number of Directory Submission Services have come to the fore on the Internet. These companies will submit your link to a free directory at a very small cost, often very cheap like \$100 to submit your website to 600 directories.

Most of these companies operate in countries like India where labor is very cheap, which is why the price is so cheap.

Taking this into account it does seem much less hassle for someone else to do all the work for you at that price, hence many webmasters are now using these services.

However there are a number of things that need to be taken into consideration beforehand, whether submitting manually or using a company.

a) Submitting your site does not mean it will be accepted into the directory. If your website is seen as spam then it will almost certainly be refused, apart from by a handful of directories who don't bother to check the content of the website.

However, even if your website is completely black hat, many directories may not bother to check the content and you could get your free link. However, the majority of them will at least check your homepage to see if the quality of your website is good enough for their directory, for this reason I always recommend that if you have a black or gray hat website, then at least put some extra effort into making your homepage look white hat !

b) Your anchor text and description will be the same in all those submissions, which will be seen as automated by the search engine algorithms. Having the same anchor text and description after your link is telling the search engines that the link has either been paid for or has been automated or mass produced in some way. If the anchor text and description was different everytime then it would not draw any attention from search engines, and it would be seen as a manually made link, or as having human input and therefore seen as a genuine vote for a website. (more about this in my conclusion)

c) If you use a company then it's a certainty that this company will be posting your link from the same I.P. number that is has used to post thousands of other sites. The directories are now receiving tens of thousands of such links, and they recognize that these links are from submission companies. Even though you may still receive an email from the directory saying that your link has been submitted, this is just an automated process, they may be rejecting links from submission companies as they see these submissions as not genuine.

I have used this kind of service in the past and I was pleased with the service, I felt that they actually did submit my website manually to amount of directories as promised, however, probably because of the above I felt that I did not get much benefit. My conclusion is that it is much more beneficial to post the links manually with a varying anchor text and completely different description each time. (more about this in my conclusion)

These services are developing more recently though and I have seen some offer 10 different descriptions and some that they will post the links at a set rate per day, e.g. 20 per day, but I still think that it's hugely more beneficial to have a different description each time. I do not make search engine algorithms, and they are kept secret, we can only second guess them, but for certain I know that a different description each time shows them the link can be trusted, because the link description is unique, the search engine can easily spot a repeated description and come to whatever conclusion it wants to, especially when the same anchor text and description is repeated hundreds of times around the internet. A lot of my success I put down to manually submitting the links to my site with varying anchor text and a completely different description each time.

(Negative SEO can be given to a target website - if a competitor posts lots of hyperlinks to that target website on "dead forums" and guestbooks using the same hyperlink text and description and also keyword spamming by typing the target website's main keywords a few dozen times, especially from the same I.P. number.)

2) Building thousands of computer generated pages / Doorway Pages / Scaper Sites.

This involves making thousands of pages really quickly using software. Nowadays there are millions of so-called "directories" or information pages, which are in fact just lists of "results". The first step would be for the Black Hat webmaster to use a keyword tool such as enteryourkeyword.com.

If his site was about viagra then he would find the thousands of keyword phrases that have been entered over the last month in search engines. EG "buy viagra online", "where can I buy viagra" "purchase generic viagra", "viagra USA company" etc

He could then enter all these search phrases into the software and it would automatically generate one page for each keyword phrase - by scouring the search engines and taking "snippets" of other websites and their URL.

This is known as "data mining" and these sites are known as "scraper sites", because they have no content of their own and all the content on that site has been "scraped" from the Internet. This kind of software is being developed to new levels which include many advanced features such as built in search engines and keyword tools, adding newsfeeds and adwords automatically, making a site map which interlinks pages in a complex way to make it not look automated and adding images randomly with related image tags.

Also similar software is available for creating many doorway pages that have no content apart from the keywords you enter.

These sites work because of the complexity of search queries.. EG Someone may search for "buy online cheap viagra in New York" and because of the literally billions of possible search phrases, just by having that phrase on that page more times than any other website - or a combination of words thereof - could see that page appearing high in SERPS for that phrase.

The upside to this is that you can make thousands of pages in a few hours, unlike a White Hat website with thousands of pages which probably took years to build.

The downside however is that should a search engine receive any complaints about your site, or notice it by their algorithm then

they will class it as spam and de-index it from their search results immediately.

Search engine algorithms are fast becoming more and more complex in order to seek out these types of websites. These days just a handful of complaints from disgruntled surfers can result in getting your website banned, so you have to be more discrete and less obvious when creating such sites. There is more about these kinds of sites in my conclusion.

Also another way of filling thousands of pages with content is by using copyright free articles, however, the problem with this is that these articles are probably also on lots of other websites and search engines will not see it as unique content. Although using this technique could still bring in thousands of visitors - however, this would require a more aggressive linking campaign, to enable your pages to beat the other pages with the same content in SERPS. So even though you can have many articles, and your website may not be seen by search engines as black hat because it does at least have content, the search engines know that this content is not unique, and it gives more importance to unique content.

More on Page Generating - Update

The hottest and newest technique to fool the search engines - and the one that is really going to give them even more headaches is "spinning" or Article Generation. Spinning is using advanced software to change the structure and wording of text so that it still makes sense. This means writing one article for your website and then spinning it thousands of times so it reads differently each time, effectively, giving thousands of unique articles that actually make sense.

This software, although not easy to use, can churn out page after page of unique articles just from one single root article. I found that combining this technology with some common sense can have huge benefits, especially when some time is taken to learn

the ins and outs of the software, you can input your keywords and have images etc - right up to the point of making completely random web pages - absolutely undetectable by search engines. This technique is set to become the Black Hat webmasters latest assault on the search engines. If you are serious about making money from Black Hat techniques then you would be heading in the right direction if you were to put some time and effort into looking into these latest techniques. I cannot recommend any particular software but just google for "article generator" or "webspinner".

(Negative SEO can be given to a target website - by the competitor building websites containing really spammy obvious doorway pages leading to the target website stuffing the pages full of the competitors keywords or obvious spam, repeating the same keywords in hyperlinks and anchors - and then putting up spammy links to those doorway pages. Then, when these doorway page sites have been indexed - the competitor could even file complaints about them to the search engines.)

3) Misrepresenting Content

Now Black Hat webmasters are moving to new heights in order to "fool" the search engines. Scraper sites are still working - and it may take years before Google and other search engines find the way to eliminate them entirely. So webmasters are using techniques such as filling the pages with uncopyright content and then changing the wording at intervals to match their keywords - such as -

"I met John and he gave me the viagra pills online website, I said I don't want to buy that viagra pills online now, so we made dinner and then went to the cinema. John is a big strong man and he likes to play golf, his favorite course is the Viagra Pills website, located on the south coast of Spain, he goes there twice a year and his handicap is viagra".. etc. This kind of page is usually cloaked. (see cloaking 9)

However these kinds of pages are usually reported by annoyed surfers and never seem to last long. They tend to be great in SERPS but are usually found out within a few weeks, so I would not recommend building a website in this way if you want something more long term. Having said that though, you will have a few weeks success, for very little effort.

Another example of misrepresenting content is by claiming that you have something on your website to attract visitors, but in reality you don't have it at all.

The most common one being the overuse of the word FREE - it's one of the most common search words on the Internet!

EG, Free Ringtones, Free Software etc.. or whatever you are promoting or selling, using the word FREE can bring in may search engine visitors.

However, upon visiting your website the surfer is offered nothing free at all, and is either offered the same or a similar product or service at a price, or redirected to your affiliate with a similar product or service, or presented with related sponsored advertising, which if they click to extend their search, it will generate you an income from the click.

Other ways of drawing in surfers are by using other common registered trade marks, company names and website names, e.g. if you are selling mobile phones then you would use common shop names such as "The Link", "Carphone Warehouse" etc..add into the equation the many different makes and models that you have found using a keyword tool and you could find that your spammy page is even beating these big businesses in SERPS because of the obscurity of the phrase that it is optimised for.

As a Black Hat webmaster you do not care about the surfers inconvenience, you just optimize your pages to draw traffic from SERPS with the hope that it can be monetized.

Using this kind of misrepresenting content can bring in many visitors, even if they don't convert as well as normal traffic, at least using that phrase brought in the traffic in the first place. So be inventive as how to misrepresent your content.

4) Buying Links.

As mentioned before in White hat 3, buying links is now against Google's search engine guidelines.

However, since links are the currency of Internet success, many companies still offer links for sale. However this is an OLD, OUTDATED practice and unless you are very shrewd and in the know with certain links selling companies or other webmasters then I would not advise in buying links – especially large quantities of links from one company... it's a dangerous practice that could easily get your site banned.

The reason that buying links in large quantities does not work is because the search engine algorithm notices that your website, along with say 20 other websites all have exactly the same backlinks on exactly the same websites and this shows the search engine that these links have been either bought, automated or are part of a linkfarm (see black hat 5) – the reason being is that it's highly impossible that 20 websites could all have the same link on hundreds or even thousands of the same pages.

Add into the equation the fact that the anchor text and description would more than likely be identical each time, which as I mentioned before shows search engine algorithms that the link is not generated by a human in a unique way, meaning it's not seen as a genuine vote for that site. I've yet to see someone offering to sell links with a different description each time, they want to take your money then press a few buttons to automatically put your link on these pages. The link will be there and that's what you have paid for, but in this new age of intelligent algorithms these kind of links are worthless, and even can count against you and give negative SEO.

Also now certain companies are becoming known to the search engines as ones selling links, and certain websites are becoming known as websites that list links which have been paid for. If your website is receiving links from websites owned or run by any companies or websites that are known by search engines to be selling links then it can now be de-indexed.

And as I have said before, the search engines now take note of how fast links to your site appear and sites can be punished for getting too many links too fast, especially when the links are all grouped in the same I.P. class.

Also you will find that when buying links, you are usually paying a monthly fee, and should you decide to cancel then those links will disappear and it will then effect SERPS positioning for that site because search engines will see the site as losing popularity very quickly.

So as we move into this new area again we have to decide not to buy links unless we are certain that they are completely undetectable, meaning they would have to be from a very reliable source.

I found buying individual links on high-ranking pages from places like eBay, or webmaster forums can work. But buying bulk links is dangerous, so if you want to go down the road of buying links then buy prestigious ones in small quantities from trusted or reliable resources.

(Negative SEO can be given to a target website - by a competitor buying lots of cheap links on zero or low ranked pages, especially if they are all in the same I.P. class - this in itself could get the target site de-indexed. But then also complaining to Google about that site and showing them the evidence of the purchased links and if this doesn't work then canceling the subscription and dumping the links could also get the site penalized in SERPS for losing popularity.)

5) Link Farming.

Link farming is where you agree to display certain links on your website and in return you will have your link displayed on lots of other websites. This is usually done by the link farm members all displaying the same Directory of links on their website - which they update at intervals.

Again this technique has had its day because search engines see all the same backlinks on hundreds of sites. It can also be done by joining FREE FOR ALL (FFA) sites, sites that will list any links and can post your link to thousands of webpages. Many of these FFA sites don't even require you to link back.

The life span of links on these FFA pages can be anything from a few minutes to a few days, or maybe a week if you're very lucky, so in many cases the link will not even get noticed by the search engines. However constantly joining these FFA rings will ensure some of the links get spidered. This used to work, but now, because of dampening filters, (time delays on links affecting SERPS, which can be anything from a few weeks to 3 months depending on the search engine), then it has practically no effect in SERPS and can only draw negative attention to your website from a search engine.

(Negative SEO can be given to a target website - by a competitor submitting their link (or the link to spam pages which point to the target website) to lots of FFA sites over and over - search engines notice that new links keep appearing and other links keep disappearing for the target website, and they can either de-index the site for link farming or penalize it in SERPS for losing popularity or being unstable. If the competitor signs up using the target website's E-mail address, as in many cases it does not need to be confirmed - in this case they would use the main E-mail address displayed on the target's website - then the target would also receive lots of spam E-mails - which in large quantities

could slow down the targets server, give them a headache trying to sort out the real E-mails from the spam and use up their bandwidth and staff resources.)

6) Redirects & Hijacking SERPS

a) Redirects Page Hijack: The 302 Exploit,

Redirects and Google An explanation of the page hijack exploit using 302 server redirects. This exploit allows any webmaster to have his own "virtual pages" rank for terms that pages belonging to another webmaster used to rank for. Successfully employed, this technique will allow the offending webmaster ("the hijacker") to displace the pages of the "target" in the Search Engine Results Pages ("SERPS"), and hence (a) cause search engine traffic to the target website to vanish, and/or (b) further redirect traffic to any other page of choice.

What is it? A page hijack is a technique exploiting the way search engines interpret certain commands that a web server can send to a visitor. In essence, it allows a hijacking website to replace pages belonging to target websites in the Search Engine Results Pages ("SERPs"). When a visitor searches for a certain term a hijacking webmaster can replace the pages that appear for this search with pages that he controls. The new pages that the hijacking webmaster inserts into the search engine are "virtual pages", meaning that they don't exist as real pages.

Technically speaking they are "server side scripts" and not pages, so the searcher is taken directly from the search engine listings to a script that the hijacker controls. The hijacked pages appear to the searcher as copies of the target pages, but with another web address ("URL") than the target pages. Once a hijack has taken place, a malicious hijacker can redirect any visitor that clicks on the target page listing to any other page the hijacker chooses to redirect to. If this redirect is hidden from the search engine spiders, the hijack can be sustained for an indefinite period of time. Possible abuses include: Make "adult" pages appear as e.g.

CNN pages in the search engines, set up false bank frontends, false storefronts, etc. All the "usual suspects" that is.

A short description Regarding the Search Engine Result Pages ("the SERPS"), It's not that the listed text (the "snippets") are wrong. The snippets are the right ones, and so is the page size, the headline, the SERP position, and the Google cache. The only thing that can be observed and identified as wrong in the SERPS is the URL used for the individual result. This is what happens, in basic terms (see "The technical part: How it is done" for the full story). It's a multi-step process with several possible outcomes, sort of like this: Hijacker manages to get his script listed as the official URL for another webmaster's page.

To Googlebot the script points to the other webmaster's page from now on. Searchers will see the right results in the SERPS, but the wrong URL will be on the hijacked listing. Depending on number of successful hijacks (or some other measure of "severity" only known to Google) the search engine traffic to the other webmaster dries up and disappears, because all his pages (not just the hijacked one(s)) are now "contaminated" and no longer show up for relevant searches. Optional: The hijacker can choose to redirect the traffic from SERPS to other places for any other visitor than Googlebot. Offended webmasters can do nothing about this as long as the redirect script(s) points Googlebot to the page(s) of the offended webmaster (and Google has the script URL(s) indexed).

While step five is optional, the other steps are not. Although it is optional it does indeed happen, and this is the worst case as it can direct searchers in good faith to misleading, or even dangerous pages. Step five is not the only case, as hijacking (as defined by "hijacking the URL of another web page in the SERPS") is damaging in the other cases as well. Not all of them will be damaging to the searcher, and not all of them will be damaging to all webmasters, but all are part of this hijacking issue. The hijack is established in step one above, regardless of later outcome. This whole chain of events can be executed either by using a 302

redirect, a meta refresh with a zero second redirect time, or by using both in combination. Which engines are vulnerable?

Search engines vulnerable to this exploit have been reported to include Google and MSN Search, probably others as well. The Yahoo! search engine is at the time of writing the only major one that has managed to close the hole. Below, the emphasis will be on Google as that one is by far the greatest search engine today in terms of usage - and allegedly also in terms of number of pages indexed. Is it deliberate wrong-doing?

The search engines affected by this operate on a worldwide scale, and laws tend to differ a lot among countries especially regarding the Internet. That said, the answer is: Most likely not. This is a flaw on the technical side of the search engines. Some webmasters do of course exploit this flaw, but almost all cases I've seen are not a deliberate attempt at hijacking.

The hijacker and the target are equally innocent as this is something that happens "internally" in the search engines, and in almost all cases the hijacker does not even know that he is hijacking another page. It is important to stress that this is a search engine flaw. It affects innocent and un-knowing webmasters as these webmasters go about doing their normal routines, and maintaining their pages and links as usual. It is not so that you have to take steps that are in any way outside of the "normal" or "default" in order to either become hijacked or hijack others.

On the contrary, page hijacks are accomplished using everyday standard procedures and techniques used by most webmasters. What does it look like? The SERPS will look just like normal results to the searcher when a page hijack has occurred. On the other hand, to a webmaster that knows where one of his pages used to be listed, it will look a little different. The webmaster will be able to identify it because he will see his page listed with a URL that does not belong to the site.

The URL is the part in green text under listings in Google. I am not implying anything whatsoever about intent, as I specifically state that in most cases this is 100% un-intentional and totally unknown to the hijacker, which becomes so only by accident. It is an error that resides within the search engines, and it is the sole fault of the search engines - not any other entity, be it webmasters, individuals, or companies of any kind.

So, I have no reason to believe that what you see here is intentional, and I am in fact suggesting that the implied parties are both totally innocent. Google search: "BBC News" Anonymous example from Google SERPs: BBC NEWS | UK | 'Siesta syndrome' costs UK firms Healthier food and regular breaks are urged in an effort to stop Britain's workplace "siesta syndrome".
r.example.tld/foo/rAndoMLettERS - 31k - Cached - Similar pages
Real URL for above page: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4240513.stm

By comparing the green URL with the real URL for the page you will see that they are not the same. The listing, the position in the SERPs, the excerpt from the page ("the snippet"), the headline, the cached result, as well as the document size are those of the real page.

The only thing that does not belong to the real page is the URL, which is written in green text, and also linked from the headline. NEW: This search will reveal more examples when you know what to look for: Google search: "BBC News | UK |" Do this: Scroll down and look for listings that look exactly like the real BBC listings, i.e. listings with a headline like this: BBC News | subject | headline Check that these listings do not have a BBC URL.

Usually the redirect URL will have a questionmark in it as well. It is important to note that the green URL that is listed (as well as the headline link) does not go to a real page. In stead, the link goes straight to a script not controlled by the target page. So, the searcher (thinking he has found relevant information) is sent directly from the search results to a script that is already in place. This script just needs a slight modification to send the searcher

(any User-Agent that is not "Googlebot") in any direction the hijacker chooses. Including, but not limited to, all kinds of spoofed or malicious pages. (In the example above - if you manage to identify the real page in spite of attempts to keep it anonymous - the searcher will end up at the right page with the BBC, exactly as expected (and on the right URL as well).

So, in that case there is clearly no malicious intent whatsoever, and nothing suspicious going on). Who can control your pages in the search engines? This is the essence of it all. In the example above, clearly the BBC controls whatever is displayed on the domain "news.bbc.co.uk", but BBC normally does not control what is displayed on domains that BBC does not own. So, a mischievous webmaster controlling the "wrong URL" is free to redirect visitors to any URL of his liking once the hijack has taken place.

The searcher clicking on the hijacked result (thinking that he will obtain a news story on UK firms) might in fact end up obtaining all kinds of completely unrelated kinds of "information" and/or offers in stead. As a side-effect, target domains can have so many pages hijacked that the whole domain starts to be flagged as "less valuable" in the search engine.

This leads to domain poisoning, whereby all pages on the target domain slips into Google's "supplemental listings" and search engine traffic to the whole domain dries up and vanishes. And here's the intriguing part: The target (the "hijacked webmaster") has absolutely no methods available to stop this once it has taken place. That's right. Once hijacked, you can not get your pages back. There are no known methods that will work. The only certain way to get back your pages at this moment seems to be if the hijacker is kind enough to edit his/her script so that it returns a "404 Not Found" status code, and then proceeds to request removal of the script URL from Google. Note that this has to be done for each and every hijack script that point to the target page, and there can be many of them.

Even locating these can be very difficult for an experienced searcher, so it's close to impossible for the average webmaster. The technical part: How it is done Googlebot (the "web spider" that Google uses to harvest pages) visits a page with a redirect script. In this example it is a link that redirects to another page using a click tracker script, but it need not be so. That page is the "hijacking" page, or "offending" page. This click tracker script issues a server response code "302 Found" when the link is clicked.

This response code is the important part; it does not need to be caused by a click tracker script. Most webmaster tools use this response code per default, as it is standard in both ASP and PHP. Googlebot indexes the content and makes a list of the links on the hijacker page (including one or more links that are really a redirect script) All the links on the hijacker page are sent to a database for storage until another Googlebot is ready to spider them.

At this point the connection breaks between your site and the hijacker page, so you (as webmaster) can do nothing about the following: Some other Googlebot tries one of these links - this one happens to be the redirect script (Google has thousands of spiders, all are called "Googlebot") It receives a "302 Found" status code and goes "yummy, here's a nice new page for me" It then receives a "Location: www.your-domain.tld" header and hurries to your page to get the content. It heads straight to your page without telling your server on what page it found the link it used to get there (as, obviously, it doesn't know - another Googlebot fetched it) It has the URL of the redirect script (which is the link it was given, not the page that link was on), so now it indexes your content as belonging to that URL.

It deliberately chooses to keep the redirect URL, as the redirect script has just told it that the new location (That is: The target URL, or your web page) is just a temporary location for the content. That's what 302 means: Temporary location for content. Bingo, a brand new page is created (never mind that it does not

exist IRL, to Googlebot it does) Some other Googlebot finds your page at your right URL and indexes it. When both pages arrive at the reception of the "index" they are spotted by the "duplicate filter" as it is discovered that they are identical. The "duplicate filter" doesn't know that one of these pages is not a page but just a link (to a script). It has two URLs and identical content, so this is a piece of cake: Let the best page win. The other disappears. Optional: For mischievous webmasters only: For any other visitor than "Googlebot", make the redirect script point to any other page free of choice. Added: There are many theories about how the last two steps (13-14) might work.

One is the duplicate theory - another would be that the mass of redirects pointing to the page as being "temporary" passes the level of links declaring the page as "permanent". This one does not explain which URL will win, however. There are other theories, even quite obscure ones - all seem to have problems the duplicate theory does not have. The duplicate theory is the most consistent, rational, and straight-forward one I've seen so far, but only the Google engineers know the exact way this works. Here, "best page" is key.

Sometimes the target page will win; sometimes the redirect script will win. Specifically, if the PageRank (an internal Google "page popularity measure") of the target page is lower than the PageRank of the hijacking page, it's most likely that the target page will drop out of the SERPs. However, examples of high PR pages being hijacked by script links from low PR pages have been observed as well. So, sometimes PR is not critical in order to make a hijack. One might even argue that -- as the way Google works is fully automatic -- if it is so "sometimes" then it has to be so "all the time". This implies that the examples we see of high PR pages hijacking low PR pages is just a co-occurrence, PR is not the reason the hijack link wins. This, in turn, means that any page is able to hijack any other page, if the target page is not sufficiently protected (see below).

So, essentially, by doing the right thing (interpreting a 302 as per the RFC), the search engine (in the example, Google) allows another webmaster to convince it's web page spider that your website is nothing but a temporary holding place for content. Further, this leads to creation of pages in the search engine index that are not real pages. And, if you are the target, you can do nothing about it. 302 and meta refresh - both methods can be used.

The method involving a 302 redirect is not the only one that can be used to perform a malicious hijack. Another just as common webmaster tool is also able to hijack a page in the search engine results: The "meta refresh". This is done by inserting the following piece of code in a standard static HTML page: `<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="0;url=http://www.target-website.com/folder/file.html">` The effect of this is exactly as with the 302. To be sure, some hijackers have been observed to employ both a 302 redirect and a meta redirect in the 302 response generated by the Apache server. This is not the default Apache setting, as normally the 302 response will include a standard hyperlink in the HTML part of the response (as specified in the RFC). The casual reader might think "a standard HTML page can't be that dangerous", but that's a false assumption. A server can be configured to treat any kind of file as a script, even if it has a ".html" extension. So, this method has the exact same possibilities for abuse, it's only a little bit more sophisticated. What you can - and can not - do about it Note the bolded part of item #4 in the list above. At a very early stage the connection between your page and the hijacking page simply breaks. This means that you can not put a script on your page that identifies if this is taking place.

You can not "tell Googlebot" that your URL is the right URL for your page either. Here are some common misconceptions. The first thoughts of technically skilled webmasters will be along the lines of "banning" something, i.e. detecting the hijack by means of some kind of script and then performing some kind of action. Lets' clear up the misunderstandings first: You can't ban 302

referrers as such Why? Because your server will never know that a 302 is used for reaching it. This information is never passed to your server, so you can't instruct your server to react to it. You can't ban a "go.php?someURL" redirect script Why? Because your server will never know that a "go.php?someURL" redirect script is used for reaching it. This information is never passed to your server, so you can't instruct your server to react to it.

Even if you could, it would have no effect with Google Why? Because Googlebot does not carry a referrer with it when it spiders, so you don't know where it's been before it visited you. As already mentioned, Googlebot could have seen a link to your page a lot of places, so it can't "just pick one". Visits by Googlebot have no referrers, so you can't tell Googlebot that one link that points to your site is good while another is bad.

You CAN ban click through from the page holding the 302 script - but it's no good. Yes you can - but this will only hit legitimate traffic, meaning that surfers clicking from the redirect URL will not be able to view your page. It also means that you will have to maintain an ever-increasing list of individual pages linking to your site. For Googlebot (and any other SE spider) those links will still work, as they pass on no referrer. So, if you do this Googlebot will never know it.

You CAN request removal of URLs from Google's index in some cases This is definitely not for the faint at heart. I will not recommend this, only note that some webmasters seem to have had success with it. If you feel it's not for you, then don't do it. The point here is that you as webmaster could try to get the redirect script deleted from Google. Google does accept requests for removal, as long as the page you wish to remove has one of these three properties: It returns a "404 Not Found" status code (or, perhaps even a "410 Gone" status code) It has this meta tag: `<meta name="robots" value="noindex">` It is disallowed in the "robots.txt" file of the domain it belongs to. Only the first can be influenced by webmasters that do not control the redirect script, and the way to do it will not be appealing to all.

Simply, you have to make sure that the target page returns a 404, which means that the target page must be unavailable (with sufficient technical skills you can do this so that it only returns a 404 if there is no referrer). Then you have to request removal of the redirect script URL, i.e. not the URL of the target page. Use extreme caution: If you request that the target page should be removed while it returns a 404 error, then it will be removed from Google's index.

You don't want to remove your own page, only the redirect script. After the request is submitted, Google will spider the URL to examine if the requirements are met. When Googlebot has seen your pages via the redirect script and it has gotten a 404 error you can put your page back up.

Precautions against being hijacked I have tracked this and related problems with the search engines literally for years. If there was something that you could easily do to fix it as a webmaster, I would have published it a long time ago. That said; the points listed below will most likely make your pages harder to hijack.

I will and can not promise immunity, though, and I specifically don't want to spread false hopes by promising that these will help you once a hijack has already taken place. On the other hand, once hijacked you will lose nothing by trying them. Always redirect your "non-www" domain (example.com) to the www version (www.example.com) - or the other way round (I personally prefer non-www domains, but that's just because it appeals to my personal sense of convenience). The direction is not important. It is important that you do it with a 301 redirect and not a 302, as the 302 is the one leading to duplicate pages. If you use the Apache web server, the way to do this is to insert the following in your root ".htaccess" file: RewriteCond

```
%{HTTP_HOST} !^www\.example\.com RewriteRule (.*)
http://www.example.com/$1 [R=301,L] Or, for www-to-non-www
redirection, use this syntax: RewriteCond %{HTTP_HOST}
!^example\.com RewriteRule (.*) http://example.com/$1
```

[R=301,L] Always use absolute internal linking on your website (i.e. include your full domain name in links that are pointing from one page of your site to another page on your site) Include a bit of always updated content on your pages (e.g. a timestamp, a random quote, a page counter, or whatever) Use the `<base href="">` meta tag on all your pages Just like redirecting the non-www version of your domain to the www version, you can make all your pages "confirm their URL artificially" by inserting a 301 redirect from any URL to the exact same URL, and then serve a "200 OK" status code, as usual.

This is not trivial, as it will easily throw your server into a loop. Precautions against becoming a hijacker Of course you don't want to become a page hijacker by accident. The precautions you can take are: If you use 302 redirects in any scripts, convert them to 301 redirects instead. If you don't want to do this or are unable to do it, make sure your redirect scripts are disallowed in your "robots.txt" file (you could also do both). After putting your redirect script URLs in "robots.txt", request removal of all the script URLs from Google's index - i.e. request removal of all items listed in "robots.txt". Contrary to popular belief, including an URL that is already indexed in "robots.txt" does not remove it from Google's index. It only makes sure that Googlebot does not revisit it. You have to request it removed to get it removed.

If you discover that you are listed as having hijacked a page in Google, make the script in question return a 404 error and then request removal of the script URL from Google's index Recommended fix. This can not and should not be fixed by webmasters. It is an error that is generated by the search engines, it is only found within the search engines, and hence it must be fixed by the search engines. The fix I personally recommend is simple: treat cross-domain 302 redirects differently that same-domain 302 redirects.

Specifically, treat same-domain 302 redirects exactly as per the RFC, but treat cross-domain 302 redirects just like a normal link. Meta redirects and other types of redirects should of course be

treated the same way: Only according to RFC when it's within one domain - when it's across domains it must be treated like a simple link. Added: A Slashdot reader made me aware of this: RFC 2119 (Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels) defines "SHOULD" as follows: 3. SHOULD This word, or the adjective "RECOMMENDED", mean that there may exist valid reasons in particular circumstances to ignore a particular item, but the full implications must be understood and carefully weighed before choosing a different course. So, if a search engine has a valid reason not to do as the RFC says it SHOULD, it will actually be conforming to the same RFC by not doing it.

(Negative SEO can be given to a target website - by hijacking the SERPS as above, banishing the targeted website / webpage into supplemental results.)

7) Cheating on reciprocal links.

Cheating on reciprocal links can mean making a lowly link exchange into a lucrative one-way link. There are a number of ways Black Hat webmasters use to do this. White Hat webmasters should also be aware of these techniques as they are more than likely being used against them.

a) Dishonoring Link Exchanges.

The Black Hat webmaster would go about getting normal link exchanges in the same way a White Hat would do.. however after reaching a certain amount of exchanges he would just delete all the links he has to his reciprocal links partners. This would mean all the links to his site on the sites he traded links with, will automatically become lucrative one way links - this still works - and probably always will, search engines can't penalize your website for not linking to a site it used to.

Using this technique can sometimes jump your website really high in SERPS. However, depending on the diligence of the webmasters who are honoring your link, it can have a short life

span and you may see your site yo-yoing up and down the search pages.

Many webmasters will check on a daily basis to see if all their links trades are being honored, whereas others may just assume its there for life, others may use a robot to check their links on a daily basis. But if you immediately start looking for more links trades and repeating the process over and over then you will find that lots of the websites will keep your link and not check to see if their reciprocal link is still in place, helping you build up a healthy catalogue of one way links.

Or instead of deleting the links pages just move them, so that no other pages on your website link to it, meaning when your link partners check for their reciprocal link it is still there, however that page will no longer be in your site map, meaning your site, in the eyes of the search engine - is not linking to your link partners.

Again this can have various effects depending on the people linking back to you. Some websites will only trade links on PR value of pages, and if you remove the page from your site map it will lose its pagerank.

Another way to dishonor a link exchange is by not giving your link partner a HTML link. Most search engines count only HTML links, even though clicking the link leads to your website - it may not count in search engines unless it is in HTML.

Although search engines are developing and some are counting php and asp links, it's a webmasters code of conduct to display each others link as HTML. To be absolutely sure that the link is in HTML then point your mouse over the link, right click and then "Copy Shortcut", then paste it into notepad and see the exact link. If it does not read a direct website address, EG "http://www.viagra4uonline.com/" then its not a HTML link.

There are a variety of ways of cheating link partners out of HTML links, such as using php, where the link address would be

something like "http://www.thepharmacydirectory.php=out?link-id=345"

Also White Hatters should be aware that many Black Hat webmasters are also using the >no follow tag on their link partners links - although I have yet to see any definite proof that this actually makes your links on the other sites into one way links or has any effect, it certainly gives your links partners links no importance whatsoever.

Highly experienced Black Hat webmasters are taking dishonoring link exchanges to a different level now. Employing techniques which can completely fool experienced link exchangers. Pages can look as is they are using no Black Hat techniques at all, they seemingly display link partners links in HTML, don't use >no follow tag and the page is in the websites site map, however the only true way you can be sure that the link is being honored is by checking the source code, because many Black Hatters are using iframes, frames and even frames within frames, displaying content from other pages, within a frame and some search engines can't or even won't spider framed content, rendering the link useless or using a frame and a robot command to tell the search engine not to spider the framed content.

However, these Black Hat webmasters can also hide their source code, or even use cloaking methods to hide the real page. (see Black Hat 9)

b) Dishonored Cold Link Exchange Requests

As a webmaster you are probably in receipt of dozens of daily E-mails for asking for link exchanges. Usually along the lines of :-

"Hi I am Jeff, webmaster of The Pharmacy Directory and we think that your website would be a valuable resource for our users. We have posted a link to your website from ours. Your link can be found at www.thepharmacyresource.com/links/drug/drugs23.htm

Your link reads Buy Generic Viagra Online - Viagra Forum and Other Men's Health Products. All order sent worldwide via UPS. (hyperlink to <http://www.viagra4uonline.com/>)

Links trading can be beneficial for both our sites in the search engines so please consider posting a link back to us from your website. If so please reply giving us the location of our link and we will keep your link active so long as ours is. We hope this can be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Thank You Jeff

Although I can't conclusively say that each one of these kind of cold link requests have Black Hat in mind, we do know that this is a favorite technique for lots of Black Hatters, the reason being is that it can be easily automated, takes very little time and effort and can have the biggest rewards. Using an E-mail spider - a tool you can use to spider websites looking for E-mail addresses, the Black Hat webmaster will enter a search string like "pharmacy" and the E-mail spider will search all websites containing that word and return any E-mail addresses, alternatively the spider can just return the website addresses which can be used to second guess an E-mail address, EG www.thepharmacydirectory.com - would instantly create E- mail second guess addresses of webmaster@thepharmacydirectory.com, info@thepharmacydirectory.com, admin/links/contact etc.

The Black Hatter would then harvest all these website addresses and also use another spider to extract the websites Description Meta Tag to use as the text to create his link. This information is then used to automate hundreds or even thousands of links pages. This information is also used as inserted data into the E-mail template - giving the E-mail that personal touch and making it look convincing.

The experienced Black Hatter would even use one of the above methods such as deleting the links pages etc..as well. Because of the little time and effort involved this technique can gain you thousands of one-way links - some of them on decent ranked pages and in the same theme as your site.

The only risks involved in this is if you keep continually sending the same E-mail to the same people then it would be classed as spam. You can counter this to some degree by adding the correct text in the E-mail like "This E-mail is a one off business partnership request" - or words to that degree and "You are not on any E-mail list and your E-mail address is not being stored"

8) Empire Building.

Empire Building is where a webmaster has many websites in his portfolio and links them all together giving each site one-way links from within his empire. This used to work but is now also seen as similar to Link Farming. However it still can be beneficial to link up your sites in an undetectable way. EG if you have 6 websites, a,b,c,d,e,f - then link site a to b and c, site b to d and e, etc... design a link strategy with no pattern that cannot be detected. However, if your websites are black hat then linking them together like this could be dangerous, because should one website be found then there would be a trail to the others, so I do not recommend doing this. You are only giving your sites a handful of links anyway, so its not that important, there are plenty more places where you can get free links !

(Negative SEO can by given to a target website - by a competitor building many spam / doorway page sites pointing to the target website and interlinking them all to each other in a really obvious way.)

9) Cloaking.

Cloaking is a Black Hat SEO technique, where the content of the website changes depending on the identity of the surfer. This is

done by making a cloaking script which delivers content based on the I.P. address or the User-Agent HTTP header of whatever is requesting the page, in short - finding where the surfer came from. Cloaking is also used to trick surfers into visiting a site based on the search engine description, which would be completely different to the actual content of the site - on most occasions porn, but also used for drugs and gambling websites. The cloaking is usually combined with doorway pages.

Many search engines will ban websites that use cloaking. For example a cloaker can have a cloaked webpage - and if the surfer came in from a search engine they would be shown the real content of the page - such as porn. However if the surfer came from anywhere else then the cloaked webpage would show. This is important as the cloaked content would be seen by search engine bots - and would be used in the search engines descriptions, it would also be seen by people from directories - allowing the cloaker to get links to his website in directories without them realizing that they are linking to porn, and by webmasters for link exchange requests who may also not realize that they are inadvertently link to porn, drugs or gambling websites.

Cloaking works because the uncloaked page may just be full of spam in order to get a keyword match to bring in a surfer from SERPS, and the black hat webmaster does not want the surfer to see the uncloaked page as it may lead to a complaint. So the surfer is presented with the cloaked page, which in many instances will have very little to do with what the surfer was actually looking for. The black hat webmaster just hopes that a few tempting pictures of naked women, or a promise of a huge sign up bonus to a casino will distract the surfer, however it usually has the opposite effect and a disgruntled surfer will report the website to a search engine.

Cloaking should only be used for easily disposable websites and usually has a very very short life span in the search engines. For this reason I do not recommend using cloaking at all, not only

because of the short life span, but also because of the very little conversions. I have had cloaked pages bringing in thousands of hits without a single conversion. So I suggest that your time is better spent on using other methods that bring in a more targeted keyword surfer to your website, at least that way you can be sure that their keywords have some match to your product and therefore a stronger chance of converting.

Despite many black hat SEO forums and webmasters singing the praises of cloaking, you will usually find that their praises lead you to an affiliate link to buy a cloaking script or product that they 'recommend', in the hope that you buy the product and therefore they make a commission. But there are many free cloaking scripts available online.

(Negative SEO can be given to a target website - by a competitor building many spamdexed / doorway page sites pointing to the target website using really obvious cloaking techniques.)

10) Linkbaiting.

Linkbaiting is the practice of getting other websites to link to yours.

It can be said that linkbaiting itself is not black hat. True, if you are a complete white hat and have fantastic content, free games, free porn, funny jokes etc then people will naturally link to you.

However as a black hat webmaster, who wants to link to your spammy website !

Many black hat webmasters will do anything to get a link, so the promise of other people linking to any of his pages is not to be missed.

Black hatters will make legitimate blogs or forums and create really controversial postings in the hope that others will link to it. Even though the actual forum will not be a black hat website, if many people start linking to it then it would gain a high page rank

and the black hatter would use this page with a high ranking to promote his black hat websites.

Some of these postings will make really unusual claims or promises, e.g. If I made a blog promising the first 10000 people to sign up to receive my newsletter will each receive a free iPod, then could you imagine the furor ! Many surfers will use their social bookmarks to bookmark it, getting the page linked in places like Digg, Stumbleupon etc.. they will talk about it on their blogs and place links to it and within days the page could have hundreds of FREE incoming links giving it a nice fat pagerank with hardly any effort. A fantastic place to put your link to casinoviagrapornblog.com !

11) Spamdexing.

Spamdexing is a word created by merging the words spam and index.

Spamdexing is creating pages specifically for search engines, in an attempt to get a high ranking in SERPS for particular obscure phrases.

For example a favourite method of spamdexing is ensuring you have many major cities, towns, or countries included in the text on a webpage, so if a surfer is looking for your product or service in a particular area then there is a greater chance of them hitting upon your website via a search engine - e.g. - "pharmacy in Manhattan".

In this instance the spamdexing technique would probably include the names of many popular drugs within the text also, giving the spamdexer many obscure phrases on his website that may be ranked in SERPS.

Spamdexing involves black hat SEO webmasters to literally sit there and think what surfers may be inputting into search engines

in order to find his website and reverse engineering and optimizing these pages specifically for search engines.

This may include many phrases like, "where can I buy", "buy online", "online shopping" etc and include many brand names, registered trade names, and companies website names in order to try to get their traffic from search engine users who may search for those names.

However, spamdexing websites are fast becoming a thorn in the side for many disgruntled surfers who regularly report them to the search engines. In many instances it can only take a handful of complaints by surfers to a search engine to draw attention to a spamdexing website to the point that the search engine will send an investigator to the site to determine its quality and if it is in breach of the search engines guidelines.

This is why this technique is fast becoming outdated – read more about this in my conclusion.

12) Buying Traffic.

I've included buying traffic here, not because it's a black hat technique, but because many people think it is !

But my conclusion about buying traffic is .. What a waste of time. You can pay a company to send 50000 hits to your site,,,,, what is the point, you won't get any sales. You can also buy a program so you can send fake hits to your site.. WHAT IS THE POINT. No search engine ranking is based on how many hits you've had. The only benefit of having many hits on your webcounter would be pumping up your Alexa ranking, but this doesn't bring in surfers - unless you can get your website into the movers and shakers.

You may as well manually go to your counter and type in how many hits you want for that day.. they are both the most pointless, useless, foolish products on the web and are the subject of a mass marketing scam, fooling webmasters. Yes they can "Get

your hit counter spinning" but not with real people so what's the point ? It's actually costing money to you by eating up your bandwidth.

Many marketing companies promise to get you real targeted visitors which will lead to sales, but this is impossible. How on earth can a company get a person to click on a website selling Ink Cartridges. If the person wants to buy them he doesn't go to a website promotion company he goes to a search engine and searches for it. These companies may "get your hit counter spinning" However they usually do it in a variety of ways : -

1) They use a program which just automatically sends periodical hits to your website, sometimes via a proxy server with different I.P. numbers. Your hit counter may have registered a visitor however, the visitor was just a computer.

2) They use old or closed down or mis-spelt URLS which just direct the surfer to your site. Have you ever been unwillingly directed to a website, what do you do ? You click it off straight away. Even if the surfer doesn't click it off then what are the chances they are going to be interested in your website or products.

3) They use pop ups or pop-unders which may contain dozens of websites within frames.

I have in the past bought traffic from many sources. I once experimented with a new website which was getting about 300 hits per day and converting to between 6 -10 sales on average. However, when I bought over 10 million hits from ten different companies over 1 month there was absolutely NO upturn in sales. What more proof do you need that buying traffic is a scam ?

Webmaster blogs and forums are full of people who have said they bought hundreds of thousands of visitors but sold absolutely nothing, so keep your money in your pocket and don't assume that this kind of bought traffic can lead to success.

13) Attacking Competitors Websites

Other Ways to Hurt Competitors

Other ways competitors websites can be targeted are :-

When a black hatter sends out lots of spam E-mails "promoting" the target website - Also the black hatter could include questionable or even illegal content in the E-mail, to create a barrage of complaints to the authorities and from the recipients, leaving the targets main E-mail address in the E-mail.

If a black hatter targets a competitors website in this way then they would need to have the knowledge and skill not to leave any footprints or evidence, taking into account that this would be ILLEGAL.

Also if the target website receives lots of complaints from the recipients then this would also clog up their inbox and take up staff resources.

Bombing - Bombarding a target website.

A black hatter can send lots of automated queries to the target website. If the targeted website has a search facility then a black hatter can make a script sending thousands of automated queries - this would use up valuable bandwidth, also hurting the target website financially and may even slow the target site down.

A black hatter can put hotlinks to images on the targets website - a hotlink is where the image is drawn from the target website onto another page outside their domain - this works especially on pages with high traffic, for example posting the image in a very popular forum, eating up valuable bandwidth of the target site.

The black hatter would target the largest images which take up more bandwidth.

Hurting a Competitor Financially

Sponsored Ads

If a target website is using an advertising campaign such as Google Adwords - then a competitor can hurt them financially by repeatedly clicking on their ads. This revenue loss may result in them having to cut back on their SEO costs, such as links, advertising etc - which could indirectly result in their site sliding down the SERPS. However, the black hatter will also be inadvertently helping Google to make money.

Multi-pronged Attack

A black hatter can also attack a website simultaneously on many fronts such as using the automated queries, along with subscribing the targets main E-mail address to lots of spammers, along with 302 redirects, along with sending lots of spam E-mails pointing to the target site, along with sending lots of bought traffic to eat up bandwidth, along with hotlinking to many of the sites images and clicking repeatedly on that sites sponsored ads.

This type of multi-pronged attack is sure to slow the target website down severely - and may even grind it to a halt - and is guaranteed to eat up tons of bandwidth - pumping up the targets bandwidth costs - and completely clogging up their E-mail inbox.

This can in turn affect the targets websites position in SERPS indirectly when webpages start taking too long to load and search engine bots give up - if the search engine bots come back many times and notice the page is still not loading then it can be de-indexed or given less priority in SERPS.

THE BARE FACTS.

Quotes from Googles Webmaster Page, found at <http://scholar.google.com/webmasters/facts.html>

(Google keeps changing the URL of this page periodically so just search for google.com/webmasters/facts.html)

Fiction: A competitor can ruin a site's ranking somehow or have another site removed from Google's index.

Fact: There's almost nothing a competitor can do to harm your ranking or have your site removed from our index. Your rank and your inclusion are dependent on factors under your control as a webmaster, including content choices and site design.

Fiction: Joining a link exchange or "free-for-all" link program will boost my rankings.

Fact: Linking schemes will often do a site more harm than good. Many sites that advertise link-sharing programs not only offer little value, but will distribute your E-mail address without your permission, resulting in an increased volume of unwanted mail.

So from on the same page two contradicting quotes. If Google says "There's almost nothing a competitor can do to harm your ranking" - Emphasis on the "almost nothing" But then says "Linking schemes will often do a site more harm than good." Then how can Google judge whether that sites linking strategies are the work of the site owner or a competitor ? Or is Google psychic ?

Come on Google, change your statement to "There is absolutely nothing a competitor can do to harm your ranking". This is what webmasters want to hear.

Well here is how it really is !

Fact: Using the negative SEO techniques detailed in this eBook will get a site either de-indexed or dramatically effect their SERPS positioning. Especially when all combined together. However this will also depend on the strength of that site. For example trying to dump a high ranked website like BBC or Yahoo will be impossible because of the sheer strength of its backlinks and pagerank, this also goes for most websites with a Google Pagerank of 7 or more.

Using these techniques on sites ranked 5 or 6 will have varying effects, but can have a big effect if attacked constantly over a period of months. Sites ranked 4 and under are there for the taking.

Search engines make the rules - however because of all the spam taking over the search results, all the search engines are desperate to show who's the best by adopting desperate measures to clear it up - unfortunately this can also mean third parties associating another website with spam and Black Hat techniques and affecting this websites SERPS or even getting it de-indexed.

The process of trying to de-index or affect the SERPS of another website has now been named "Googlebowling".

Conclusion - The Middle Way - Gray Hat SEO

As in Buddhism - the best path is the middle way. I would neither recommend White Hat SEO (too much effort, too little results, years of work, months of work before any results) or Black Hat SEO (too many risks, website can be worthless as soon as its noticed or reported, low conversions or click throughs as the surfer sees the site as spammy).

I would recommend Gray Hat. Which is somewhere in the middle. This would mean making semi automated websites, don't make them look too spammy, have some human input, you have to be able to pass the spam test (See Spam Recognition Guide at the end of this eBook) - meaning if someone reports that site as spam to a search engine it would have to pass the censors.

Yes, this is very difficult, as you want to build a site with little effort. So use an article generator or spinner. Create one root article and spin it 1000 times, making 1000 unique articles, then add into the article at regular intervals, the keyword phrase that you are optimizing the page for, also add in any spamdexing and

misleading content such as free, towns, cities, buy / purchase / online /website ect phrases, and registered trade names that are appropriate.

Size - The main problem with making a huge website with tens of thousands of pages is that is very easy to detect. A new site just "appearing" overnight from nowhere with so many pages is easy enough to ring any alarm bells with search engine algorithms. Again, to fight this effectively I would not be completely Black Hat. You would build just a few dozen pages and add to them slowly by about 10-20 per day, and you would keep your site relatively small, say about 1000 pages max, this way it can easily slip under the radar.

If your main keywords for the product or service you want to promote produces 8 thousand unique possibilities in your keyword tool then just make 8 different websites each with about 1000 pages and promote them individually, but do not interlink them, because this would mean once one site gets found there is an instant trail to the other sites.

Make half decent postings on high ranking membership forums, be willing to put some time and effort into promoting your site, and try to use your signature to post your link. If you want a direct link then on sites that don't allow a signature make sure they allow you to leave a link legitimately and always check that the forum doesn't use the no follow attribute, but it's not that important because high ranking forums that use the no follow attribute will give your profile page lots of links juice when you make a few postings, so write a nice profile page with lots of keywords stuffed in and linking to your website. Keep a list of the forums you have joined including your username and password, and check back every so often to post another link. If you are using the signature method then remember not to post too many links as they all have the same anchor text and description and you cannot change this else all the previous descriptions on your other posts will change.

Submit your link to as many free directories as you can, but only ones that you actually find in search engines. Remember to vary your anchor text and use a completely unique description each time. (see Links Myth) You can easily search Google for 'free directory', 'regular links free', directory free submit...etc..or combine it with your theme or keyword for a more precise match, there's thousands of them !

Don't waste your time when you come across huge lists of free directories that are on many websites. You may think it's beneficial as they are free, but most of them have a zero or very low ranking on the page where your link will appear, at least if you find a directory from a search engine search then you know it has some importance, especially if it is on the first few pages of SERPS and especially if from a good keyword match e.g. – viagra free directory.

I do not recommend using a company to submit your website to the directories. I have tried this many times, and had little success. I have checked out many of these submission companies and even looked at their "Testimonials" pages which are sometimes full of praise. However, if you check out the URL of the person giving the praise then you can easily check exactly how many links they have in search engines, especially the all important Google, (just type link:www.nameofsite.com into google). Considering they have submitted to hundreds of directories you will notice very few backlinks.

I have had no success submitting websites in this way because of what I mentioned beforehand.

Links Myth

Now there is a myth amongst many webmasters and it is argued by many experts that posting links or having too many links to your website too fast can have a negative impact. However, I am going to blow the lid on this theory, don't worry about it at all..it is incorrect.

The reason why webmasters think this, is because they have either used such directory submission services or bought a quantity of paid links or posted or traded many links that have the same description and anchor text and this draws attention from search engine algorithms.

It so easy, when you are on a promoting run, just to have your description ready on paste, and just to paste it into the description box when posting links, and this is what most webmasters do. However, if they actually made the effort to make each description different then their links would be unique, and classed as genuine rather than seen as repeat content, or automated in some way by search engine algorithms and their promoting effort would have 50 times more effect.

If having too many links pointing to a website too fast was seen as spam then the internet would not be functioning correctly. What about such overnight phenomenons as the million dollar homepage ?

What search engines notice is too many links too fast that have the exact same description and/or anchor text.

If 500 links appeared all with the same anchor and description then it's obvious to search engine algorithms that they were not individual votes, but more of a mass vote. However if those 500 links all had varying anchor text and unique descriptions then search engines absolutely love them, because they are seen as being 500 individual votes.

I suspect that the non-unique links themselves are not penalized, but just discounted in the same way that repeat content is banished into supplemental results. So even though these non-unique links may be showing up as backlinks they have no authority at all. This is one reason why some webmasters are complaining that they have x amount of links but cannot get anywhere, while another competing website has only a fraction of

the amount of links but is beating him in SERPS for all his major keywords and phrases.

So to get around this you actually use your content generator or spinner to write thousands of descriptions. It may take time but it's worth the effort.

You have your document ready with all the descriptions, and every time you post a link, you just copy and paste a new description. Also if you are exchanging links then you also provide your partner site with a unique description.

When posting links to directories then to make your links posting easier then you can turn on auto complete in internet explorer, because many of the submission forms are similar, so when you are prompted to input into such fields as email – name – URL – etc, then these fields are already stored in your computer and you can just double click the blank field and then select your previous entries, meaning you don't have to keep typing out your email address etc every time.

Cheat on backlinks. If you have the resources for the making the Cold Links Request E-mails then it's by far the best and easiest way to get reciprocal links, which you can then dump or cheat on. If you have these kind of resources then also automate your emails to give a different anchor text and description.

Don't buy large quantities of links from one company. If you really want to buy backlinks buy small amounts of high quality links and check the company out in detail and their strategies.

A good place to buy text links is actually eBay, you can buy individual links from webmasters who have decent ranked pages and especially when their site is a similar theme. It does work on trust however and you will have to research the seller (if he has good feedback) and his website and linking strategies.

I once bought 5 links of pr5 homepages for \$10 for a year of eBay ! However, be very wary of this practise.

Report the competition spammers - Go through the search engines checking your keyword phrases finding any spam sites competing with you - and report them. Most search engines have a "spam report" page. Report things like redirects, cloaking, spamdexing and computer generated and doorway pages, buying of links, hidden content and pages just designed for search engines that have no content.

Reporting this spam will get it de-indexed within days sometimes - and knocking out the competition like this means your site climbing the SERPS.

For any black hat websites that you build, at least put some effort in to make sure that your front page looks like a normal white hat website, this way you can still ask for link exchanges and submit it to directories and have a higher acceptance rate because of other webmasters lack of attention, many times they will only check out your homepage to make sure your website is acceptable.

Do not use cloaking ! – Your time is better spent getting surfers with a keyword match, as it has a much higher conversion.

Your URL

One last thing to take into consideration is your URL.

If you are selling viagra then having the word viagra in your URL also gives a slight preference in search engines because of keyword to URL matching, so whatever your website is about always have your main keywords in the URL.

PROOF

If you are still not convinced, or still not sure then I am now going to do something that a Black Hat webmaster has never done before !

I am going to PROVE that my techniques work !

I am going to show you an old black hat website that I created, and that made over \$100,000 in two years for an initial 3 days work only !!!!!.

You must promise NEVER EVER EVER to give this URL to anyone, I am watching the hit counter and if I see this URL clicked through from any blogs or forums I will delete the website completely to protect the buyers of this eBook and I will change the URL in this book to another one of my dead sites.

Go to <http://wholesalers4u.tripod.com>

This is an old website, which has just come to the end of its lifespan after more than 2 years at the top of serps.

If you click the counter link in the left column, (it's a very small red line) underneath "wholesalers of authentic brand names"

This link will lead you to :-http://cqcounter.com/?_id=wsl4u

Which is the stat counter for that website, you can see that currently it gets about 20 hits per day, its dead !

But you can see that in the past it has had between 8-900 hits per day and this converted traffic made 3 - 5 thousand dollars per month, and is still making a nominal amount of money from monthly subscription repeats.

Now click on "Year" next to "Time Period" in the left hand column and you will see the following :-

2006 80,580
2007 111,292
2008 59 44

That's the traffic for the last 3 years.

2006 was 80,580 hits
2007 was 111,292 hits
2008 is just a nominal amount from a few pages still indexed.

This traffic ALL came from search engines and each surfer was encouraged to click on one of the affiliate links on every page, and this traffic converted very well, on average about \$100 - \$200 per day, obviously I cannot prove the income, but any webmaster knows this amount of traffic, all coming in from search engines and fully targeted does have a good conversion rate. You can see that each page is made from one root article which has been spinned to read differently each time. The phrase which I am optimizing each page for is then inserted at regular intervals, plus many related keywords are stuffed onto each page and there is a selection of affiliates to choose from to geo-target the majority of surfers.

So there you have the proof, and I hope by now you have learnt how to do it for yourself...so what are you waiting for ?

Good Luck !

Legal Statement

As the author of the Black Hat eBook I do not recommend using any of the Black Hat techniques in order to attack a competitors website. I merely expose these practices for information purposes only !

I hope you are satisfied with the content of this eBook, and whether you choose to use White, Gray or Black Hat SEO then I wish you all the best luck. But remember one thing, Success on

the internet even by using Black Hat SEO is not reached overnight, if you treat it as a full or even part time job, and work regular hours building and promoting your websites then you will reap the rewards.

If you want to take the Black or Gray Hat route then please check out some recommended products on our products page at :-

www.blackhatebook.com/products.htm

If you are dissatisfied with the content of the Black Hat eBook then.. well I don't really know what to say, I hope nobody is dissatisfied. So far I have had nothing but good feedback from this book.

I have written here all my knowledge and proven to you that it works, you have paid a very small amount of money, for years of black hat knowledge, so what are you waiting for – get building your black hat / gray hat websites and within a few months you WILL be making thousands of dollars per week like I do ! Good luck !

Thank You Paul Williams

E-mail webmaster@blackhatebook.com

Also e-mail me if you notice and typos's or mistakes.

Finally, just one more thing... please do respect my work, I have taken a great deal of time and effort to write this eBook for your benefit. This book contains a lot of knowledge, which has taken many years to build up and is well worth the low price you paid for it, especially if you implement it to make \$\$\$\$

This book is the intellectual property of Paul L. Williams and is not to be given away, printed or sold without prior permission of the author.

If you have received this book unlawfully then please help me to protect my work and tell me where you obtained it, or if you have now decided to pay for it then please let me know by e-mail.

And Finally ...

The Spam Recognition Guide

Spam Report

This is the leaked Google document - this document was sent to Google rating staff - You can use this document to judge whether or not Google may see your website as Spam.

Spam Recognition Guide for Raters

During the course of rating, you may encounter results that Google considers spam. Some are obvious but others are less overt. Provided here is an overview of spam recognition tools for use in rating projects.

Before familiarizing yourself with tools aimed at detecting spam, i.e. deceitful web design, please read Google's policies on quality web design

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/guidelines.html#quality> . In particular, pay attention to:

- The distinction between pages designed for human viewers and those set up for search engine robots
- The specific enumerated manipulative techniques for which sites may be "punished" by Google.

If you are not sure of your spam detection skills yet, you may want to subject every result page that comes up for rating to a checklist of all potential manipulative techniques that this guide explicates. With experience in spam identification, the spam-spotting techniques presented below become easy to use. You will have seen patterns of honest pages and deceitful pages;

questionable results will jump at you "asking" to be checked for evidence of spamming. If unsure, do not hesitate to ask questions!

Note on Foreign Language spam: If a page in another language uses an obvious spamming technique, do label it as spam. Spam identification often does not depend on linguistic issues.

However, if you are unable to make a determination, feel free to rate the result as Foreign Language. The same logic applies to Offensive pornographic results that are neither invited nor tolerated by the query. If you can make determination independent of the language, please do so.

Common Spam Techniques

Sneaky Redirects

What you'll see on your Quest page: URL A is shown as a query result.

When you click on the link: URL A may appear in the address bar of the browser for a brief moment, but you are sent to URL B. You might see other, transient URLs before the page finally loads with URL B visible in the address bar. One URL may sneakily redirect to a number of rotating domains, so clicking on the same result several times may land you on pages under different URLs. Those pages may or may not look the same.

What's probably going on: Domain B wants to extend its reach in our index, so it creates Domain A. Google indexes and scores the content on Domain A, yet the user is redirected to Domain B. The webmaster presents one content to the search engine robot and another to the users.

Examples:

Result URL	What visiting the page takes you to
------------	-------------------------------------

http://www.lasik-eye-surgery-laser-eye-surgery.com/	
---	--

http://1800contacts.com/	or
---	----

http://www.visiondirect.com/spanish/scripts/default.asp?AID=9483447&PID=858188	>
---	---

<http://www.juvenews.com/pics-of-car-wrecks.html>
<http://www.ofhg.com/sexsites/index.html>
<http://www.theii.net/information-on-the-great-pyramid-at-giza.html> <http://www.scbgalleries.com/freeporn/index.html>
or <http://www.scbgalleries.com/pornogallery/index.html>,
or <http://www.scbgalleries.com/openadult/index.html>,
or
<http://www.ofhg.com/freadult/index.html>,
<http://www.ofhg.com/gallery/welcome.html>,
<http://www.ofhg.com/sexsites/index.html>...

<http://pregnancy.pregnancy-pampers.co.uk/>
http://uk.pampers.com/en_GB/signup.do
<http://children.pregnancy-pampers.co.uk/>
http://uk.pampers.com/en_GB/signup.do

1. Hotlinks have been disabled for some porn pages whose content is apparent from the URL structure.

Question: Are all redirects spam?

Answer: Absolutely not!

For example, <http://www.film.com> redirects to movies.real.com, but not in a sneaky manner.

For another example, consider www.compaq.com. Compaq is a now a Hewlett Packard company. www.compaq.com redirects to <http://h18000.www1.hp.com/> in a legitimate manner.

100% Frame

What you'll see on your Quest page: URL A is shown as a query result.

When you click the link: URL A appears in the address bar of the browser. The page uses a frame that occupies all (or nearly all) of the browser window. Page B fills this frame. You need to reveal the page information for page B. In Internet Explorer, point to any place on the main page (other than an image) inside the frame with your cursor, right-click and choose "Properties".

Check Address: (URL).2

What's probably going on: Domain B is a legitimate commercial site that wants to extend its reach in Google's index, so it creates

Domain A. Google indexes and scores the content on A, yet the user is shown Domain B in the 100% frame. Again, what's created for search engine robots differs from what is created for human visitors.

Example: <http://www.catwalk4u.de/> (right-click on the web page body and choose "Properties" in IE, and note the URL, which may be one of a number of rotating sites, including <http://www.link-diener.de/mode.html> , <http://www.trixo.de/mode.html> and <http://www.looking4links.de/mode.html>).

Hidden Text / Hidden Links

What you'll see on the result page: You may notice large blank areas on the bottom or/and the top of the page. Using the keyboard shortcut for Select All on the page (CTRL-A in Internet Explorer) may reveal text or links that are hidden from the user (example: white text on white background).

2 Certain pages, primarily those that contain objects that can be copied, disable this feature.

What's probably going on: The webmaster hopes that adding more text to the page will increase the number of ways in which users can find the page searching on Google. Stuffing the page with text may put off site visitors, so the webmaster chooses to hide the text and/or links. Google scores content that the user never sees; what's being created for search engine robots differs from what is intended for human page viewers.

Example 1: <http://www.marantz.com/> -- observe pristine white space and then do select-all to reveal white-on-white text.

Example 2. On the bottom of these pages observe hidden text in a very small font size:

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

http://free-web-hosting-inc.com/fort_wayne_indiana_web_hosting.html

Porn on Expired Domains

What you'll see on your Quest page: URL A is shown as a query result. It has a relatively "benign" domain name, with no reference to porn or adult content.

When you click the link: The page has porn content.

What's probably going on: An adult content webmaster purchased Domain A after its former owner allowed his/her ownership to lapse. In Google, Domain A has some lingering good reputation in the form of PageRank. Webmasters linking to Domain A aren't always on top of their links, and their "votes" for Domain A based on old, benign content can continue indefinitely, to the adult content webmaster's benefit. Google is counting incoming hyperlinks that the new, adult content webmaster never earned, and search relevancy can be skewed.

Secondary Search Results / PPC

We want to mark as Offensive the pages that are set up for the purposes of collecting pay-per-click revenue without providing much content of their own. You will see such cases most frequently in conjunction with "search results" feeds. Please read the whole section.

What you'll see on the result page: Usually, the page presents its own set of search results. Or, the page may look like the top-level page of a legitimate directory (tree structure) but clicking on a few selections reveals ads disguised as results. Or, you see copied content from a legitimate, credible resource, without value added by the copying site, plus a PPC program in place.

What's probably going on: The owner of the site gets paid whenever users click on these secondary results. You may be able to reveal this pay-per-click scheme by pointing your cursor to secondary links without clicking on them. Observe the status bar and you may see that clicks go through espotting, overture, or another advertising company.

Let us take a look at an example:

<http://www.startcool.de/Dir/Medien/Fernsehen>

This site is simply a copy of the Open Directory Project (aka DMOZ), but has a PPC program on the right (Google AdSense); the presence of AdSense PPC on top of the ODP content makes this site (every page on it) Offensive. Think about what the incentives are for creating a copy of the Open Directory Project; ODP is a free resource that does not accept advertising. By

copying the search feed of DMOZ, sites can get contextual advertising on a pay-per-click basis. Google does not encourage creation of duplicates, so we are asking you to mark such result Offensive. Of course, had the result been a page on the Open Directory itself, it would have to be rated on the merits to the query.³ As you see, pages with the same content may be assigned vastly different ratings based on the absence or presence of a ppc program.

Here is an example of a page with `search results' (ads):

<http://www.toxiclemon.co.uk/s.php?av=custom&ver=27617&set=uk-only&qkw=lastminute&qcat=web>

Note that the links on the page go through go2net.com. Also note: some `search result' pages disguise the nature of what they do more than others. On Toxic Lemon pages, a more experienced user realizes that the results are essentially ads (Overture, Espotting are known providers of contextual ads), but this does not salvage the rating for this page. You can safely label all pages from Toxic Lemon Offensive, even if they are in another language.

Standard directories, or sites with results links that neither go through affiliate PPC programs nor redirect you through one of those programs, are usually not Offensive. One example of a non-Offensive directory is a directory that is clearly built by the site itself, not copied

(<http://www.joeant.com/DIR/info/get/5704/48827>); also, a directory that charges for membership, not for clicks, is not Offensive. Consider for instance a directory of realtors that accepts entries for a yearly fee.

Please note that when you hover the cursor over links on the page you are examining, you are not always seeing the "true" URL in the status bar below. This is because it is possible to fool users by rewriting the URL reported in the status bar using Javascript, so take some extra time to understand where the links on the page are taking you.⁴

3 ODP (DMOZ) results are not Erroneous.

4 If you use Mozilla, you may have access to extra tools for spam evaluation. Write to us for specific instructions, please.

Some common PPC and Search Engine feed domains:

searchfeed.com findwhat.com espotting.com overture.com
go2net.com

More examples:

<http://www.toxiclemon.co.uk/t/fancy-dress-shops/angle-dress-fancy-little-shop.htm>

<http://www.widgets.ws/widgets/us+robotics+modems>

<http://www.skc->

[networks.com/search.php?keywords=1260%20free%20nokia%20ri](http://www.skc-networks.com/search.php?keywords=1260%20free%20nokia%20ri)

<http://hockey-apparel.discgolfnet.com/tennessee-titans-super-bowl-screen-saver.html>

<http://www.investment-wonder.com/top-search/investment/Group-Investment-Susquehanna.htm>

<http://www.carzilla.us/cgi->

[bin/search/search.cgi?keywords=motorcycle+rally](http://www.carzilla.us/cgi-bin/search/search.cgi?keywords=motorcycle+rally)

<http://www.paley.com/search/Washing%20Machines.html>

Clicking on `results' on this page takes the user through [affiliate.espotting.com](http://www.espotting.com/affiliate); scroll to the bottom of the page on

<http://www.espotting.com/affiliate/account/login.asp> and you will see that Esportting.com engages in exclusive pay-per-click

partnerships with European sites. Another example:

<http://www.shopguide.co.uk/Washing-Machines/>

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

<http://www.tools->

[directory.us/dir/matsushita_compressor/index.shtml](http://www.tools-directory.us/dir/matsushita_compressor/index.shtml)

Thin Affiliate Doorway Pages

We differentiate between affiliates that produce extra service, value, or content, and those that simply are duplicates of other sites, set up to boost traffic to other sites and earn a commission for it. The former ones are not Offensive and should be rated on

the merits to the query. The latter ones are Offensive. Please read the whole section.

UPDATE Please read Appendix I at the end of the Guide.

Appendix I applies the distinction between thin content and added value affiliates to the case of Hotel Booking Sites.

Thin affiliate doorways are sites that usher people to a number of Affiliate programs, earning a commission for doing so, while providing little or no value-added content or service to the user.⁵

A site certainly has the right to try to earn income; we're attempting to identify sites that do nothing but act as a commission-earning middleman.

Observe where the links on the site take you. If the links are overwhelmingly leading you to one affiliate program, this is a strong signal that the site is a Thin Affiliate. Likewise, if the pages on the site are homogenous, and the links go to one or more affiliate programs, this is also a strong candidate.

In assessing sites for a Thin Affiliate rating, it is urged to click around the site (preferably during a "Sanity Check" in another browser) to determine if the links are affiliate in nature (or Pay-Per-Click, in the section that follows).

Here is an example of a Thin Affiliate:

<http://diesel-shoes.01shoes.com/Diesel-Mens-Retro-Shoes.htm>

This page has a number of marketing snippets for individual shoes, and a "More Information" button. Clicking on More Information button launches a popup window that takes you first through qksrv.net (Commission Junction), then to zappos.com. Zappos is known to have an affiliate program.

Clicking around the various navigational links on 01shoes.com shows more of the same design: a picture, a marketing snippet, and the link to Zappos via the Commission Junction; so, the correct rating is "Thin Affiliate."

The qksrv.net redirect is important to note, because online merchants often use a third party affiliate provider to take care of the link tracking and payment. Thus the presence of these domains in the links on a page, or in redirects, can strongly suggest a Thin Affiliate classification:

qksrv.net
bfast.com
myaffiliateprogram.com,
webmasterplan.de
zanox-affiliate.de

Here's another example, this one using bfast:

<http://www.internetshopping.ws/1358.htm> ,

5 Usually the commission is not paid unless the user ultimately makes a purchase; contrast this with the pay-per-click schemes, discussed above.

Point your cursor to the link that says Click here to buy ... and observe the status bar window on the bottom of your window: you will see "http://service.bfast.com/bfast/click"

<http://www.internetshopping.ws/1367.htm>

<http://www.internetshopping.ws/1362.htm>

The www.internetshopping.ws site has nothing but affiliate links: no content, no service to users.

The following is an example of a site that was built using the Amazon API.

<http://us.store-directory.org/dvd/movie/B00005JM5E.html>

Note that all of the exits on the site for buying the product lead to Amazon. All of the content on the product page, including reviews, pricing, release dates etc. are available as part of the feed. The site adds nothing to the content that can be found on

Amazon; it has no content value, nor does it add any service value to the user. A Thin Affiliate.

Here is an example of a site that should not be labeled Thin Affiliate:

<http://www.bookfinder4u.com/detail/0767914104.html>

At first cut it may look like yet another thin affiliate doorway to Amazon or B&N, but bookfinder4u.com is providing a value-added service to visitors by offering a comparison of prices between different online merchants. Ultimately you will be taken to Ecampus.com, Half.com, Amazon or another affiliate online bookseller, but the fact that they have their own price comparison infrastructure is the differentiator. To appreciate the difference, ask yourself this question: would any user want to go to www.bookfinder4u.com rather than directly to Barnes & Noble? To <http://us.store-directory.org/dvd/movie/B00005JM5E.html> rather than to Amazon? The answer to the former question is Yes, because at Barnes & Noble, the user would not be able to see any direct price comparison between the B&N's price and competitors' prices for any given item; the answer to the latter question is No or Indifferent between the two. Surely, most naive users may not even be aware when they are redirected, thrown from one site to another, etc. But if they were advised of what is going on, would then make an informed choice to go to a totally thin, no-unique-content affiliate doorway?

Another example of a page that does not fit the criteria of affiliate spam: <http://www.mothering.com/books/books.shtml#adoption> gives a list of links that all lead to Powells.com, an on-line bookseller site. Clearly the Mothering magazine earns something when the readers buy books from Powells; however, equally clearly, the page is not set up for the sole purpose of generating affiliate links: browse the site a bit and you will discover that it has rich contents. Do not call a page affiliate spam when an affiliation is only incidental to the message and purpose of a

website. To determine whether participation in affiliate programs is central or incidental to the site's existence, ask yourself this question: Would this site remain a coherent whole if the pages leading to the affiliate were taken away?

Another Example: http://books.webwab.com/item_512913.htm (clicking around on that site, you'll realize that every page simply leads to overstock.com pages)

More Examples: <http://www.thenewwidgets.com/prod/Kitchen-Etc/3-M-Command-Adhesive-Designer-Small-Hooks{1}Pack-of-2.html> PPC and A Thin Affiliate; a spam page with evidence of multiple spamming techniques is not a rare exception.

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

<http://www.malls.cheap-money.com/>

<http://www.mabuy.com/News--Politics-magazines/The-New-Yorker.asp> - a doorway to Amazon and to Ebay.

At times the result page does not fall under any of the above categories yet still strikes you as "fishy". In those cases we invite you to run the query on Google setting your preferences to show the top 20 results.⁶ View the first result page and try to find the URL you are rating. (You won't always be able to, as the result sets may have changed). If it is not in the current top 20, please rate the questionable result on the utility scale and move on. If it is in the top 20, examine the result set observing, where available, the following features:

- o Do most of the top results resemble each other, and the result you are rating, in the snippets, titles, and/or URL structure?

- o Do the result pages, when you click on them, resemble the result page you are rating in content? Contact information? Nearly identical, templated design? Affiliation with the same commercial entity?

- o What about the snippets for your URL? Do they contain dictionary-like lists of words? Repeated text?

If your answer to several of the questions above is Yes, please rate the suspicious result as Offensive. If suspicion seems unjustified - all checks come out negative - please do not give the Offensive rating. Not sure? One attribute, for example repeated

text in the snippet, may or may not be a spam signal. So, send a question!

6 <http://www.google.com/preferences?q=gf&hl=en&lr=&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8> Go to Number of Results and set to Display 20 results per page.

UPDATE Appendix I.

Hotel booking sites: spam or not?

Rating hotel booking sites is not easy. The technical questions - is it a real agency or just an affiliate? - has to be balanced against the user value considerations. We will address this issue now by giving examples of what is and is not spam.

First off, be more stringent when hotel booking sites come up as a result to a location query than when they come up to a hotel query. In other words, if you are dealing with a borderline case, resolve your doubts in favor of the Offensive rating if the query is for a location. Why? It is especially undesirable to have hotel booking sites crop up to queries that might presuppose hotels in the location of search, but might also look for a million other aspects of the location, such as reviews, transportation, a municipal site, a good resource on local history and geography, and the like. In a borderline case to a clearly hotel query (examples of such a query: [holiday inn, Cortland], [crowne plaza northstar hotel minneapolis], [Boston Park Plaza]), you may be more lenient. This is because the user intent is more unequivocally to get information on the hotel of choice, or to get a list of hotels in a location of choice. It can be argued that an opportunity to get a good deal on booking, the opportunity that some of the sites offer, is enough to warrant a merit-based rating for a hotel site.

Further, since there are affiliates and affiliates, it is important to differentiate between those who provide value added and those that just copy content and features off a feed to gain affiliate revenue without investing in offering unique and helpful services for the users.

As a fine example of the former, value-added sites, consider <http://www.europeforvisitors.com/europe/articles/amsterdam-3-star-hotels.htm>

This site has a wealth of original articles (just do a few quick clicks around). Granted, most of the links on the above URL go through [venere.com](http://www.venere.com) to get booking revenue, but the site as a whole offers a lot more than just stock hotel descriptions and booking links. Also, the comments and the apparent hand-selection of links is a definite value added service by the webmaster.

[holiday inn, Cortland],

http://traveldeals.sidestep.com/Hotel_Deals/New_York/Cortland/All/Holiday_Inn_Cortland?tk=EIKTDHHPXXX0000002 This site offers the users a download of an application to compare prices side-by-side and search travel sites. Not all users will find the application trustworthy, or worthy the extra time in learning how to use it in general, but we clearly do have an added service here - it's not just the same content off a feed. Hence, rate on the merits (Relevant).

[Boston Park Plaza]

Vital: <http://www.bostonparkplaza.com/> or <http://www.bostonparkplaza.com/default.asp?sID=home> (remember, duplicates get the same rating) Not all hotels have their own homepages; for those that do, be sure to identify the uniquely authoritative nature of those pages by giving them Vital or Useful (as the case may be) ratings. It is sometimes difficult to do the differentiation because you see the same images on the official site, on the site of true travel agents, and finally, on the multiple affiliate sites...

Let us now walk through a handful of results to this query and make a determination on spam versus relevance rating.

<http://www.reservation-services.com/bostonparkplaza.html>

What immediately strikes as unusual is the candor in the disclaimer: "The telephone number, fax number and email addresses on this site DO NOT connect to the hotel." Many affiliate sites list contact information right under the name of a hotel, so that users may be under the impression that they can call the hotel direct. Also, this site has its own staff: http://www.reservation-services.com/about_us.html ; the names of the management staff are provided. This is a piece of evidence in favor of merit-based rating: this is not just a site that is set up as a middleman between the customer and the true reservation site. Finally, prominently behind the logo you see the link to "Become An Affiliate" - follow the link and see the offer the site makes to hotels. Clearly the site acts as a travel agent between the customer and the hotel, not as an affiliate of another booking site. So we are almost ready to give a relevance rating... but wait, let us go back to <http://www.reservation-services.com/bostonparkplaza.html> and check for hidden text. Sure enough, a few hidden keywords just below the copyright statement. Offensive. Find a few other hotels on this site and check for hidden text - you will see the same keyword white-on-white under the copyright statement.

<http://boston.hotelguide.net/data/h100012.htm>

Initially seems a borderline case. You see ppc (AdSense) on the right frame. You also see links to other sites bundled together: MetroGuide, EventGuide, DiningGuide, etc. (left frame); clicking on the first three displays information specific to Boston, so availability of these sites can be considered a value added. Nice to have also: links to local restaurants and nightlife. Are they an affiliate though? Yes; try to book and you will land on <https://www.180096hotel.com/cgi-bin/bookit?SID=HG8&Dest=BOS&LKF=HGD&LANG=en&PROD=HOTEL+&DispCurr=USD&ITRK=dbP&qKey=YO330518800604&HtlId=NC+PARKP&Smk=N&Screen=0>

www.180096hotel.com , travelnow.com, ian.com and hotels.com are all one group. So you see that hotelguide.com has NO

booking capability on its own and is signed up as a travelnow affiliate. And yet it is not spam. Why? It offers a video, an unusual and valuable added service. It subscribes to a travel video library <http://www.travelago.com/> to get additional content and service. This is enough to salvage <http://boston.hotelguide.net/data/h100012.htm> from the Offensive classification. Please rate on the merits to the query, taking into account that a video might make this site more helpful than other similar ones.

To reiterate: the added value provided by, first and foremost, the video, and also

http://travel.yahoo.com/p-hotel-397998-the_boston_park_plaza_hotel-i This is to remind you that special service pages that Yahoo provides, such as Movies, Finance, Travel, and others, should always be rated based on the merits to the query and not as Erroneous (of course not as Offensive either). In your merit rating, consider how helpful independent reviews by others might be to those who plan their voyages:

"Old gross bathrooms, stained carpet, chipped paint on walls, moulding falling off of walls, radiator falling off of wall. Room was the size of a dorm room. The only good thing going for this place is the location. We paid about \$190.00 a night - NOT WORTH IT!!"

D) <http://www.boston.the-hotels.com/boston-park-plaza-and-towers.htm> You see lots of links to other hotels. These seem placed for search engine spiders, not human visitors. The goal of the site is to get all of the hotels indexed. Evidence of spam. Pictures are nice, but where do they come from? Check the properties of any image and you will see they come from travelnow (an example: http://images.travelnow.com/hotels/thumbs/NC_PARKP-rooms-1-thumb.jpg). Let us try checking rates and we get to travelnow right away (<http://www.travelnow.com/hotels/hotelinfo.jsp?cid=46844&ID=122147>); so this is an affiliate of travelnow that adds no value,

presents the feed available by signing up as a travelnow affiliate with nothing else. Images come as part of the feed. Spam - Offensive.

E) These two are not spam:

<http://travel.ian.com/hotels/hotelinfo.jsp?cid=54608&hotelID=122147&city=Boston&stateProvince=MA&country=US> and

http://www.hotels.com/best_hotels/us/ma/boston/boston_park_plaza_and_towers.jsp Ian.com (and hotels.com with its Benny the Bellhop logo, and travelnow.com) are a group that does the reservations (see

<https://www.travelnow.com/itinerary/reserve.jsp?cid=46844>).

They spawn affiliates but are not affiliates themselves (a critical distinction). Whitelist them, please.

<https://www.travelnow.com/itinerary/reserve.jsp?cid=46844>

Tripadvisor, as you know, is whitelisted for the added value it provides in the form of reviews and rate comparisons.

<http://boston.guide-to-hotels.com/boston-park-plaza-and-towers-hotel.html> Again see a link to popular hotels by cities: Las

Vegas, New York, etc. Cannot be there for the user (you usually are intent on going to Boston when you search for [boston park plaza] and not anywhere else) so must be placed for the spider.

Is this site getting all content from an affiliate feed? Let us try sending a piece of the snippet to Google: ["The Boston Park Plaza and Towers is a traditional, landmark hotel"]

Sure enough,

<http://travel.ian.com/hotels/hotelinfo.jsp?cid=54608&hotelID=122147&city=Boston&stateProvince=MA&country=US> displays the same snippet. This is where the content comes from (you can see

in Google listing to the search many more affiliate pages with

identical information. Let us try booking on <http://boston.guide-to-hotels.com/boston-park-plaza-and-towers-hotel.html>

And we immediately land on www.180096hotel.com:

[http://www.180096hotel.com/cgi-](http://www.180096hotel.com/cgi-bin/chkrates?SID=BIO&Dest=BOS&LKF=BIO&TRK=_B4_link&PRO)

[bin/chkrates?SID=BIO&Dest=BOS&LKF=BIO&TRK=_B4_link&PRO](http://www.180096hotel.com/cgi-bin/chkrates?SID=BIO&Dest=BOS&LKF=BIO&TRK=_B4_link&PRO)

D=HOTEL&Month=05&Day=29&Year=04&Nights=02&Adults=02&Children=00&Beds=1&Smoking=&LANG=

So the content is off a feed, the reservations are through travelnow, is there anything added? Rating information, may be? In fact, the feed gives the rating information for the affiliates themselves, as a confidence index of the hotel's promptness in remitting the affiliate fee to the affiliate sites; it has nothing to do whatsoever with the guest satisfaction level.

Finally, if the site offers others to become its affiliates, it cannot be an affiliate itself. For instance, on the now whitelisted site www.180096hotel.com, notice the link to "Affiliate With Us " :

<http://www.180096hotel.com/cgi-bin/hotelinfo?SID=R10&LKF=MT4&HotelId=NC+PARKP&HName=BOSTON+PARK+PLAZA+AND+TOWERS&Dest=BOS&displayAd=false>

One cannot both be an affiliate of others and offer affiliation opportunities. So the presence of the link to become an affiliate is your hint that the site has its own booking functionality and can complete transactions for its visitors.

Hint to Black Hat Webmasters

If you are using a thin affiliate website - which I guess most of us are - then the technique I now use is to display my affiliate link within an iframe - and use a robot command so that the url in the frame is not spidered.

This makes it impossible for a search engine spider to see your site as a thin affiliate website, meaning only human intervention can spot this.

Paul L. Williams
THE END.