

Linking Strategies

Keywords make the internet possible. But the second most important element of the Internet involves linking of websites. Think of it – it’s called the World Wide Web because all websites are connected to other sites in some way. It’s the ultimate six degrees of separation game.

When you entertain linking to other websites, there is a double-bind involved. Why would you want to link your site to another for someone on your site to click and leave? Unfortunately, you won’t get any links to your website if you don’t create any links from your website to others. It is important that search engines see your website connected to the rest of the web by links coming to your site from other sites.

One-way links

One-way links are links where a high Page Rank (PR) website links to your site and you are not required to reciprocate. This is a rather unlikely expectation for a new site or business. However, there are sites that do provide one-way links and they usually fall into the category of directories. This can be helpful to getting started from the standpoint of search engine awareness, but you usually don’t experience an increase in traffic from these directories since the competition is quite high. When a higher PR page links to a lower-ranked PR page, the higher PR page gives away some of its Page Rank to the lower-ranked page. This is important to remember for you as well as you gain in PR.

Reciprocal Links

Reciprocal linking: A site linked to another that in turn links back to you. There problem for the higher-ranked page as already explained. However, the reciprocal linking process is usually a wash if the PR is similar for both pages. The value is in having links offsite that point back to your website so the search engines can see some recognition from others on the web.

3-Way Links

This particular linking strategy has come into favor because of the potential canceling effect of reciprocal two-way linking as described above. Site A would link to Site B which would link to Site C. The only caution involved is making sure that your PR is not being diluted by a low PR page. That is, consider:

Page A = PR 5

Page B = PR 4

Page C = PR 0

If Page A links to Page B, this is acceptable. Or if Page B links to Page A, this is also a good link. However, if the requesting webmaster wants to link their Page B to your Page A and offers a reciprocal link to Page C, you (as Page A) are on the losing end of this relationship. Page A is giving away 1 PR level to Page B and getting no PR value from Page C. Consider carefully before agreeing to a 3-way link exchange to be sure the link is advantageous to you or at least balanced.

How to Find Link Partners

There are a few different linking procedures that will help you create the “world wide web” effect on your website. In your search for link partners, look at your major keywords and then come up with an associated but not necessarily competitive set of keywords. An example of this might be a web designer looks for web hosting sites, computer consulting websites, or flash programming websites. Your associated link partners would be any website that is supportive of your industry without being in direct competition or associated to your business.

The websites that you locate that are good candidates for link exchange will require an initial contact and will want to look at your pages content.

A reciprocal linking program that automatically creates the links and the responses to link requests is an excellent way of establishing link partners, with Link Metro there is a free version that you can start with but it requires that you create the links on your page manually. If you sign up for the advanced membership, the creation of links is automated. Since I receive up to 200 link requests per week, the time I save is well worth the \$20/month subscription fee. A service such as this sets up a channel of communication between potential link exchange partners and gives you the opportunity to either accept or reject the request based on the other persons PR, content, time in business, and so on.

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Chesa Keane has been designing and developing web sites with an eye toward search engine optimization and traffic generation since 1995. TAO Consultants offers online web and SEO courses to help you make the most of your web business and investment at the www.computergoddess.com website.