Let's take segmenting of social media sites one step further and create a segment to determine which websites within your own niche are sending traffic to your website. You might wonder why this would be important. Knowing which sites in your niche are continually sending traffic to your website is valuable information. Once you find out which sites are helping you by sending traffic, you can leverage this information by contacting that niche site and trying to cross promote, guest blog, sponsor, make link requests, etc.

To create this Advanced Segment all you need to do is follow the same instructions as the Social Media Traffic advanced Segment, but this time instead of entering social media sites as sources, enter the URL's for websites in your niche that are sending traffic to your website. If you are not sure which websites in your niche are sending traffic, I'll show you how to find that out.

To discover which websites in your niche are sending traffic to your website all you need to do is follow these few steps:

**1** Click "Standard Reporting" tab at the top of your Google Analytics Dashboard.

**2** Select "Traffic Sources" from your right hand tool bar

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**3** Click "Referrals"
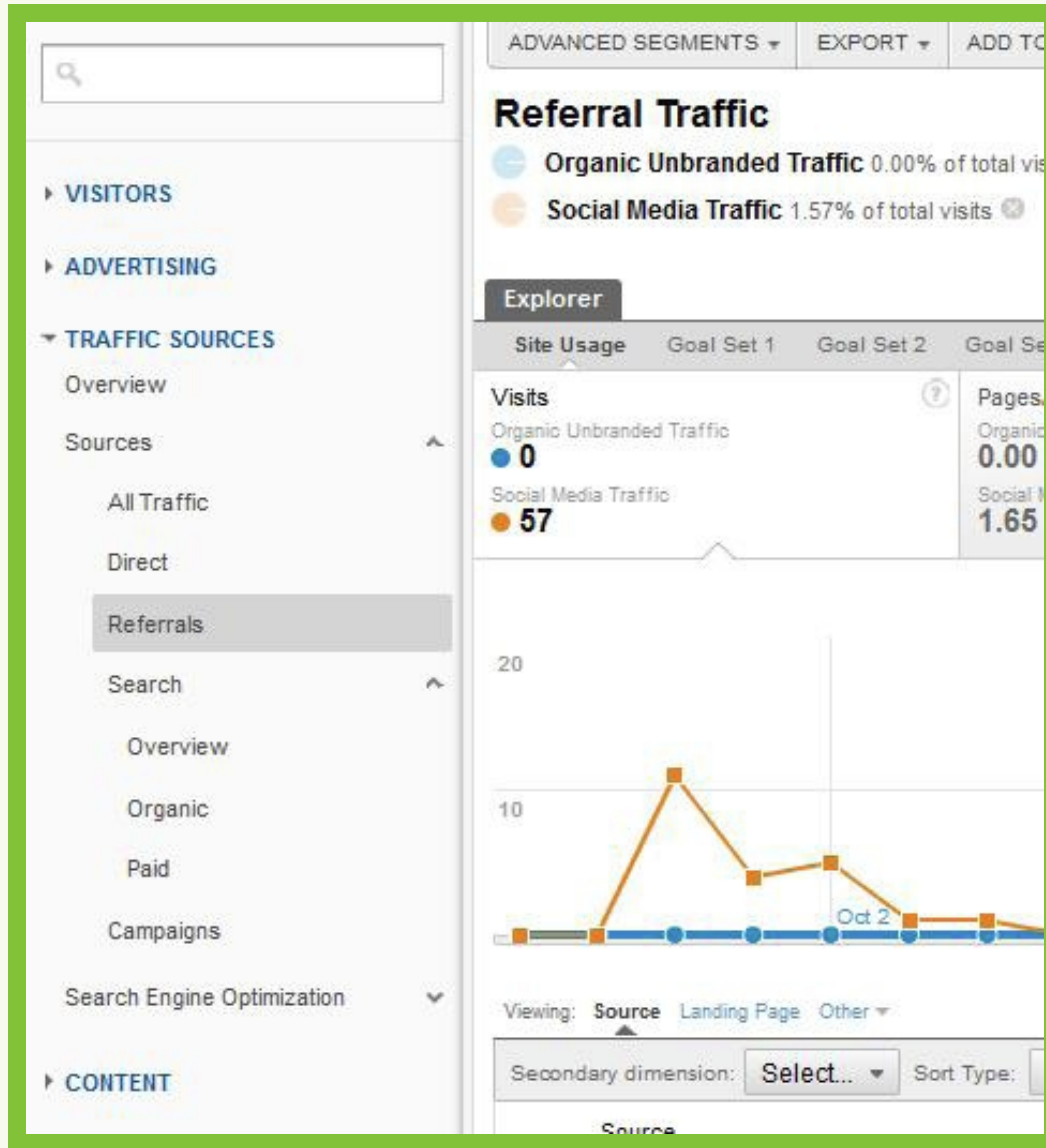


**3** Scroll down to the breakdown of all the Referral Sources, or websites that are sending you traffic.

**4** By default, Google Analytics will only show you 10 at a time but you can change this by increasing the number of rows show from the "Show Rows" drop down. Select 500.

**5** You now have a list of all the websites that are sending traffic to your website. If you have a strong grasp of your niche community and which websites are in that niche you can browse through all your referrals and take note of which sites you want to include in your Niche Traffic advanced segment. Be sure to utilize the search option if you are looking for a specific site.

**QUICK**SPROUT

Now that you can create your own Advanced Segments that will show you which niche websites, which social websites, and what unbranded organic traffic is coming to your website.

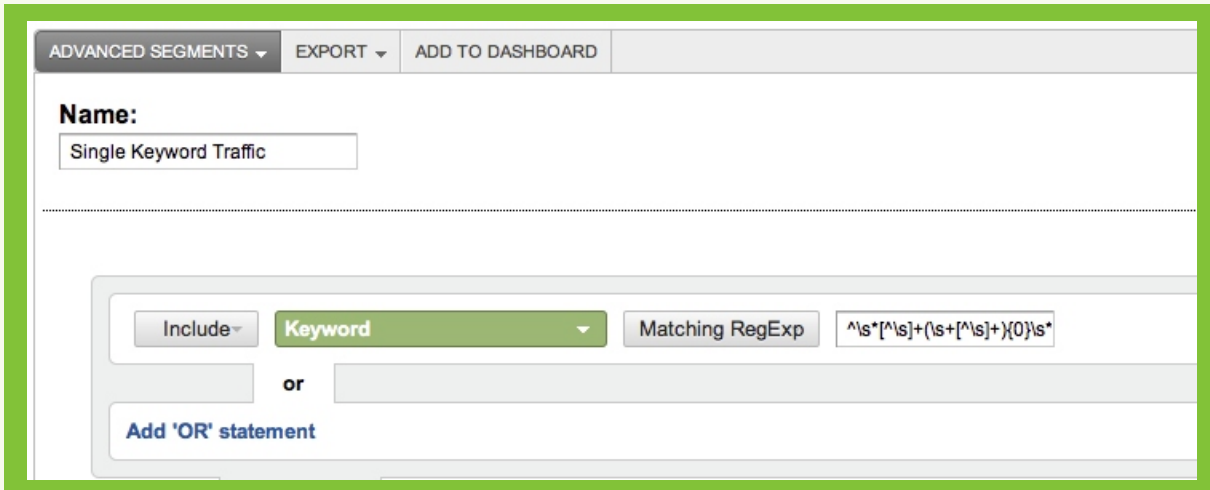Let's explore using regular expressions in Advanced Segments.

A regular expressions is defined as,

"In computing, **a regular expression** provides a concise and flexible means for "matching" (specifying and recognizing) strings of text, such as particular characters, words, or patterns of characters." - Wiki

For our purposes we are going to use regular expressions to further manipulate the data that Google Analytics is returning to us. The use of regular expressions can be explored to any depth you like, and can be utilized in very advanced ways. I want to give you a simple example of how to utilize a regular expression to get Google Analytics to segment only keyword phrases that sent traffic to your website that were a single word.

## Setting Up a Advanced Segment to Segment 1 Word Keyword Phrase Traffic Using Regular Expressions

1. Navigate to your Dashboard

2. Navigate to your Advanced Segments dashboard

3. Click "+New Custom Segment"

4. Set your variables to look like this-

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The regular expression you are using here is:

^\s*[^\s]+(\s+[^\s]+){0}\s*$

This is telling Google Analytics to only segment off keywords that are 1 word. You can modify this regular expression by changing the {0}. You can set it to {1,2} to segment 2-3 phrases and so on.

Using regular expressions, or regex as you might find them called, can become a very advanced technique that can yield some very interesting data. There is a lot of information online regarding regex and how to utilize it and understand it, so explore further.

## Yoast Google Analytics Plugin

One of the great things about utilizing Wordpress as your content management system (CMS) is that there are tons of awesome plugins at your disposal that can help you optimize your business website to fullest. Besides all the cool widgets and themes you can play with, you'll definitely want to take advantage of the Yoast Google Analytics Plug In.

This analytics plug in can do it all, and it's really simple to set up and use. The latest version release Yoast now boasts such features as:

▸ Custom Variables

▸ Asynchronous code

▸ Track by author

▸ Automatically tracks clicks and outbound links as events

▸ E-commerce integration

▸ API integration

## How to Install Yoast Google Analytics Plug In

Since Yoast is a Wordpress Plug In, installing it should a piece of cake
.
Here's how to install it incase you don't know how to use Wordpress Plug Ins:

1. Navigate to your Wordpress Dashboard
2. Click "Plugins"
3. Click "Add New"
4. In the search field type "Yoast Google Analytics". This should bring up the plug in.
5. Once your find the right plugin click "Install" from the "Actions"
6. Next you need to authenticate the plugin, follow the on screen instructions that are given to you.

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Yoast should successfully be installed now. You might need to give the plugin 24 hours to grab your stats and for it to start recording traffic.

If you are having further issues please check out  Yoast's web site.

# ANALYTICS TOOLS OF THE TRADE

### KISSmetrics

An app for measuring conversions utilizing custom funnels. It tracks people, not page views which will help you better target your customers and optimize your web site and conversion process.

### CrazyEgg

An app for tracking clicks and scrolls using heatmapping technology. It's easy to implement and can provide valuable insights into how users are using your site.

### SEOmoz

SEOmoz has a great suite of tools including campaign tracking resources that let you track rankings over time, keep an eye on competitors and find opportunities to capitalize.

### Clicky

Clicky can be an alternative to Google Analytics because it provides all the useful data you would get from Google's free analytics program but Clicky offers data in real time. It isn't free though.

### Google Analytics

Use this great, free analytics suite on your website to find stats such as traffic, visits, bounce rate, traffic sources, and more. Use it to track more complicated and sophisticated metrics such as events and goals. It's free to use and easy to install, so there is no reason you shouldn't be using it as either your main analysis platform or a back-up.

### RankChecker

RankChecker is a great search engine rank checking tool that is offered through SEObook and is free to use. Once you have your list of keywords that you will be targeting with your on and off page seo campaigns, use this tool to periodically check the rankings of those keywords. All you have to do is import your list of keyword phrases, the url of the website you're checking and sit back and let the rankings information flow. Export the results to excel for sorting and analyzing.

### Yoast Google Analytics Plugin

Free Wordpress plug in that gives you greater flexibility in measuring your websites data with Google Analytics. It can offer more custom variables, automatic set up events and more.

### Piwik

Piwik is an open sourced analytics program that can provide you much of the same information that Google Analytics can but the advantage to using Piwik is that the app is installed on your server so that you have better access to all of your data, not only what Google Analytics chooses to show you.

### Excel

Utilize Excel to sort and analyze your analytics and rankings data. Excel is also great for reporting results. Advanced functionality and functions can be used to really dig deep and get some great insights into your data, like using pivot tables to sort data.

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# ANALYTICS PLAN OF ACTION

Now that you've completed this portion of the guide, let's run down all the steps that you should have implemented while working through it. If you missed a step or didn't implement something while you were reading the guide, go ahead and put the missed step into place now.

**STEP 1** ▶ **Install Google Analytics**

Before you can start your analytics monitoring you need to install Google Analytics or whatever analytics tool you are going to be using. Once installed, take a couple of days to test to make sure it is accurately tracking data.

**STEP 2** ▶ **Setup Goals & Events**

Setup goals and events to track important conversion on your website. Make sure you tag any conversion point of your website as a goal or event and monitor the data your collect closely. Continue to add new goals and events as your business and website grow.

**STEP 3** ▶ **Setup Unbranded Organic Traffic and Any Other Advanced Segments You Want**

Use the steps outline above in this guide to set up your unbranded organic traffic advanced segment so that you can monitor your SEO efforts. Keep track of which keywords are sending traffic to your site, which are converting and which ones you should focus your efforts on.

**STEP 4** ▶ **Monitor Your Traffic and Use It To Make Changes**

Regularly monitor your traffic, analyze the data and use it to make changes to your website and SEO campaigns. Monitor the most important metrics of your website and don't get distracted by vanity metrics.

**Some items you will definitely want to keep track of are:**

**1. Overall Traffic**

Make sure your traffic is constantly increasing and that there are no major dips in your traffic. If there are dips or slowdowns, figure out what caused them and fix it.

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### 2. Organic Unbranded Traffic

Keep track of the which keywords and the number of keywords that are sending traffic to your website. This information will be vital for your SEO efforts.

### 3. Goals/Events

Keep a close eye on the number of goals and events that are completed by your visitors. You want the number to constantly increase. If they aren't you will need to further optimize your website to increase goals and event completions.

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## PART 2

# SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

BIG BRAND TRAFFIC SECRETS

# SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

## Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO for short) is the process of optimizing a web page or website through various techniques in an effort to improve the web page or website's ranking in search engines.

SEO is made up of many small parts and actions and a lot of research before you get started. These are all in an effort to get your website to rank #1 in a search engine for a valuable keyword phrase. SEO can basically be broken down into two main sections: On-Page Optimization and Off-Page Optimization. That is how this guide will be laid out-in to portions. The first portion will focus on On-Page Optimization followed by Off-Page Optimization.

## On-Page Optimization

On-page optimization consists of creating your website and its content in accordance of what major search engines are looking for in terms of how each search engine ranks web pages in search results. On-page optimization has many facets from content creation, meta description optimization, to technical improvements that can be done to enhance your website like improving page load times. I will discuss the most important areas to optimize on your website, and how to do so, in this guide.

## Basic SEO Elements of Your Website That Need Optimization

These are the most important elements of your website that have implications for SEO.

## Title Tag
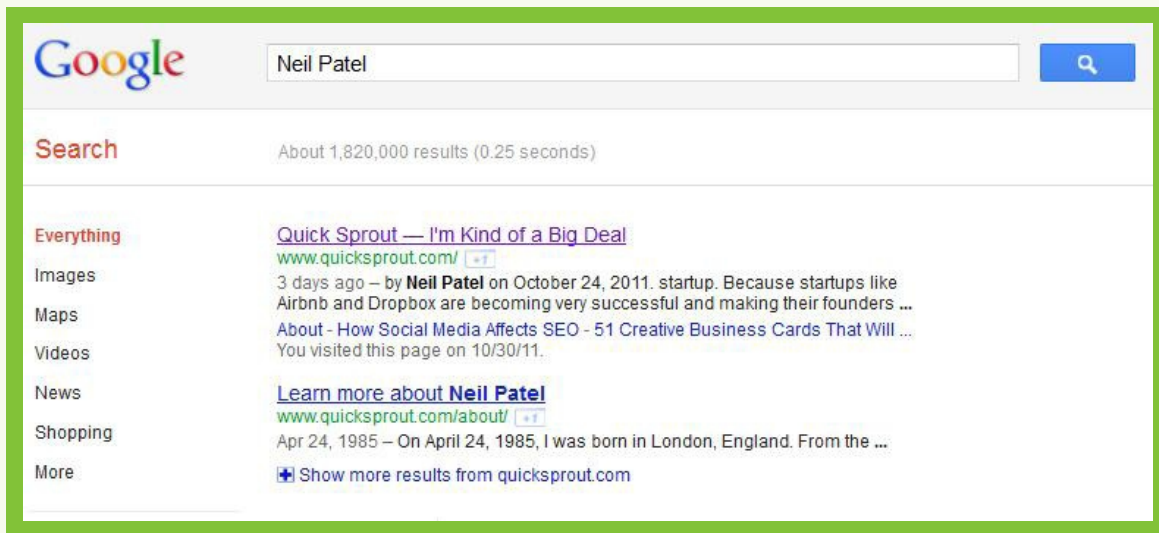


You may not know what a title tag is, but you have seen it. Every time you perform a Google search, websites with relevant title tags usually show up toward the top of the page. For example, I searched for the term "Neil" in the image above. Most of the results have the word "Neil" in the title tag. This means, if you want to rank for a specific term (like, Neil), that term should be in your title tag.

Take a look at your blog's source code, the title tag will be close to the top and it will look something like this: *<title>Quick Sprout – I'm Kind of a Big Deal</title>*. Ideally, your title tags should be descriptive, short, unique, and somewhat keyword rich. With a blog, the title tag of each page is the title of your blog post, but this does not mean you can't optimize it.

## How to Optimize Your Title Tags

Your title tag is very important to your website's performance in the search engine rankings pages (SERP). You need to be able to craft title tags that are appealing to users but also optimized for search engines. Here's how to do that.

## Title Tags and SEO

Title tags might be the most important factor in your on-page SEO strategy. We can assume title tags are a major ranking factor for at least Google and have a big impact on how your website ranks and if users will click-through to your website once you do show up in the rankings. The title tag needs to be descriptive and utilize targeted keyword phrases that you want to rank for and that represent the page accurately.

## Length of Title Tags

Your title tag should be no longer than 70 characters in length. Why? Because when title tag shows up in the search results, Google will only display 70 characters correctly. Anything after 150 characters will be cut off.

Check this out:



Notice how everything after "News" is cut off? Well this is the full Title Tag,

**<title>NBA - National Basketball Association Teams, Scores, Stats, News, Standings, Rumors - ESPN</title>**

Almost 27 characters are left out of the title when displayed in the SERPs, leaving the Title Tag looking incomplete and less appealing to users.

This is a much more optimized title tag as it displays correctly in the SERPs

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## Keywords

Your title tag needs to contain keywords that are relevant to the page's content. The keywords you use should be very specific and descriptive of what is on the page because the title tag is representative of the page's content. But don't go stuffing the tag with as many keywords as you can think of. Search engine spiders do not take kindly to keyword stuffers and your page will likely not rank for anything, or something unrelated. If you can't figure out what your webpage is about, how is a search engine going to?

Choose one to three keywords to target in each title tag and craft a tag that both spiders and users will be able to read and understand.

Let's look at a quick example of a well crafted title tag in the wild.



Notice how the title tag is descriptive and accurate in terms the content on the page? The title tag targets a few of keyword phrases like, "music subscription service", "premium music subscription", and so on. This title tag also fits within the allowed amount of 70 characters. It also features another important factor: a big brand.

Google loves big brands; it has made no qualms about that being known. So, while your website can still rank well despite not having a big brand attached to it, it is wise to include your brand, if possible.

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I suggest including your brand at the end of the title tag, so the emphasis is on your targeted keyword phrase rather than your branded keyword phrase, which shouldn't need any help to rank.

## Uniqueness

Every single page on your website should have a unique title tag that is not used anywhere else on your website. This will give search engines a better chance at returning the right page for the search query. If you have two pages with the title tag "Great Flowers For Sale" but only one page is talking about *great flowers that are for sale*, how is the search engine to know which page to return? What if it returns the wrong page? Avoid this problem by crafting unique title tags for each page. If you have two pages about the same thing, condense the two pages into one page so you can create an effective title tag.

## Things to Keep in Mind About Your Title Tags

- No more than 70 characters
- Focus on 1-3 keyword phrases in each Title Tag
- The more targeted the keywords you choose, the better
- Create a descriptive and accurate Title Tag to represent your page
- Include the most important keyword phrases at the front of the title tag
- Write your Title Tag for both users and search engines
- Include your Brand name in the Title Tag
- Every page needs to have a unique Title Tag

## Meta Description

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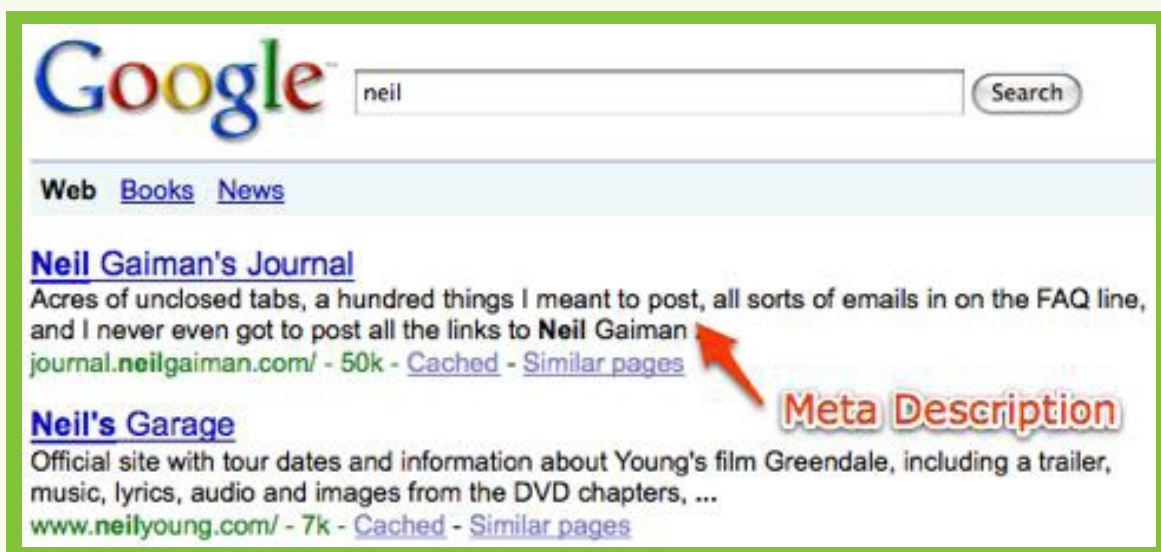
If you look at the image above, you will get a good understanding of what a meta description is. A meta description is a short sentence that describes what a web page is about. Each meta description tag on your blog should be unique, short, and descriptive.

## Optimizing Meta Description Tags

Getting your website to rank well in the SERPs is only half the battle; you still need to convince users to click on your link.

Your description tag is your chance to show users that your website will have what they want. You have 150 characters to convince each user to click your link and go to your website.

## Description Tags and SEO

While description tags are very important when you are optimizing your website for search, the contents of your tag do not have a direct effect on the algorithm Google uses when it evaluates and ranks your website. Description tags are there for the user, not the search engine.

Another thing to be aware of: even if you include a description tag, Google does not guarantee it will be used in the SERPs. You can consider a description tag more of a suggestion to Google, like, "Hey search spider, this is what this page is about, can you use this for the description tag?" Google will more often than not utilize the description tag you include, but do not be surprised if Google decides to grab another snippet of text from your page and use that instead. There isn't anything you can really do to prevent this from happening, so include the description tag to at least give Google something to use if they choose too.

## What Makes a Great Description Tag?

A great description tag is made up of two parts. The first is a *unique value* proposition or a UVP. The UVP is what makes your site unique. It should demonstrate why your site is the best choice and what value it provides. The next part of the description tag is the *call to action* or CTA. This is your opportunity to tell the user what to do--Tell the user to click through or buy something from your site. If you gave your users a great UVP follow it up with a compelling CTA that urges them to perform an action and convert.

**Disneyland** California 3 Day Park Hopper Discount Admission ...
www.citypass.com/california/**disneyland**  +1
Southern California CityPASS® includes a 3-Day **Disneyland**® Resort Park Hopper® & one Magic Morning early park entry. Save 32% with CityPASS®.

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Remember that your description tag should only be 150 characters in length to avoid Google cutting it short in the SERPs.

If you're going to edit your description tags manually using HTML here is what it will look like

<meta name="description" content="The official source for NFL news, video highlights, fantasy football, game-day coverage, schedules, stats, scores and more" />

Only edit the content with the quotes after **content**=

If you have Wordpress, you can manually edit your Description Tags or use a tool like All-in-One-SEO to easily edit your tags.

## Things to remember about your Description Tags

- 150 characters max length
- Make it descriptive and convincing
- Should be equal to or less than 150 characters long
- Should contain a unique value proposition (UVP) and a call-to-action (CTA)
- Should encourage users to want to click-through to your webpage

## XML Sitemap

The XML Sitemap is a way to let search engines know what URLs are on your website and are available to be crawled while including additional information how often the website is updated. Creating an XML Sitemap is easy, and there are many free tools online to generate one and submit it each search engine.

Here is a great list of tools from Google to create XML sitemaps.

## HTML Sitemap

An HTML Sitemap is much like an XML Sitemap but it is created using HTML and does not allow you to provide additional information about your URLs.

## 301 Redirects

301 redirects are a way to tell spiders that one page has permanently been moved to another page. Have proper redirects in place is vital to avoiding users landing on broken or missing pages, which can kill your chances at converting.

Redirects are also important in terms of how users access your website. You'll need to be sure that your website is only accessible from either the non-www version or the www version. They might look like the same domain but you are running the risk of link juice being split between the two domains, having different versions of pages returned in the SERPs. You can make sure you have the right domain set by deploying redirects and choosing which version you want in Google Webmaster Tools.

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## Alt Tags

```
</li><li><a title="Post to Google Buzz" class="google-buzz-button" href="http://www.google.com/buzz/post"
onclick="javascript:_gaq.push(['_trackEvent','outbound-article','http://www.google.com']);" data-button-style="small-count">
type="text/javascript" src="http://www.google.com/buzz/api/button.js"></script></li></ul><p><img src="http://www.quicksprout
alt="startup" title="startup" /></p>
```

Alt tags are used to give search engine spiders additional information about an element on your website. Alt tags can be applied to several types of elements on your website, like images and links. Image alt tags are vital because even though Google is improving its ability to analyze photos and classify them, providing the search engine with additional information via an alt tag is a great way to say, "Hey search engine, this image is of a green car that was made in America". If you do not include alt tags you're leaving it up to the search engine to figure it out.

## Internal Linking Structure

Internal Linking Structure refers to how you link to other pages within your website. Developing a good internal linking structure is important for multiple reasons, including usability and accessibility for search engine spiders to effectively crawl your website and index your webpages.

Be sure you strategically place links on certain pages to increase click-throughs and conversions.

## Page Load Speeds

Page Load Speeds are vital to your website's success on multiple fronts. Google does factor in the speed at which a page loads into their organic search algothrim. While it is unknown the exact weight it carries in the algothrim, it is assumed that the slower the page loads, the more penalty is put on your page. On the other side of that coin is the usability issue related to a slow loading page. Unfortunately, website visitors tend to care more about speed than all the bells and whistles we want to add to our websites.

According to surveys done by Akamai and Gomez.com, nearly half of web users expect a site to load in two seconds or less, and they tend to abandon a site that does not load within three seconds. Seventy-nine percent of web shoppers who have trouble with web site performance say they will not return to the site to buy again and around 44% of those web shoppers would tell a friend if they had a poor experience shopping online.
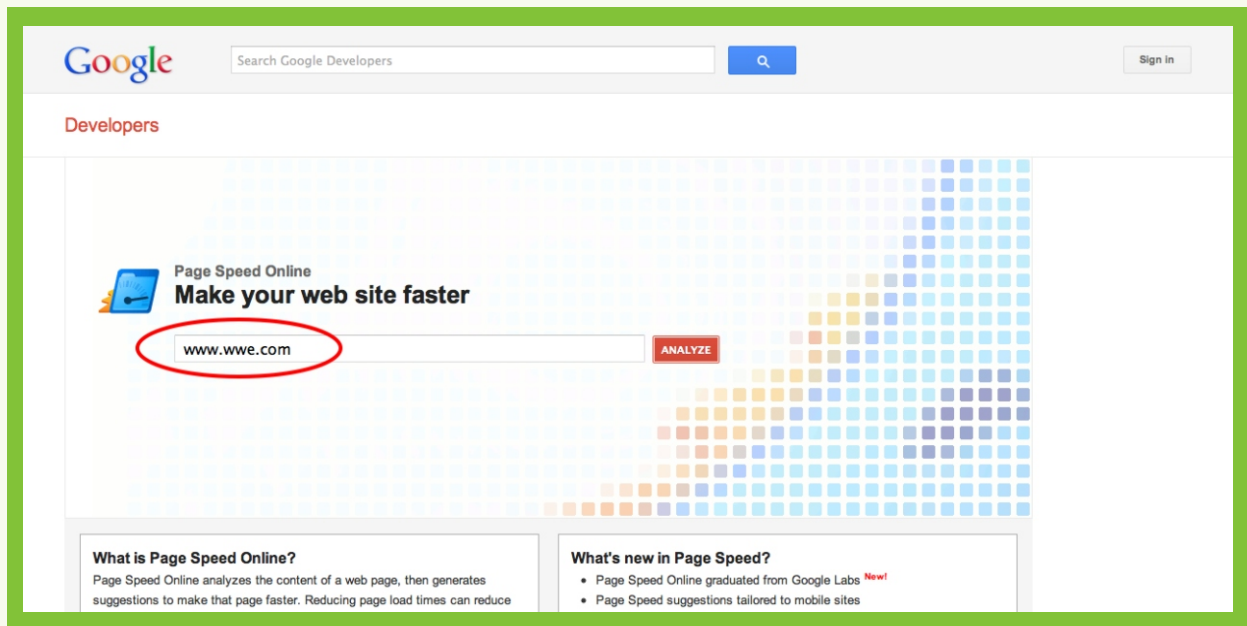
A great way to check your page load speeds is to use a free tool that Google provides. Page Speed Online is an awesome tool that will analyze your page load times and give them a rating and then give you tips on improving your pages.

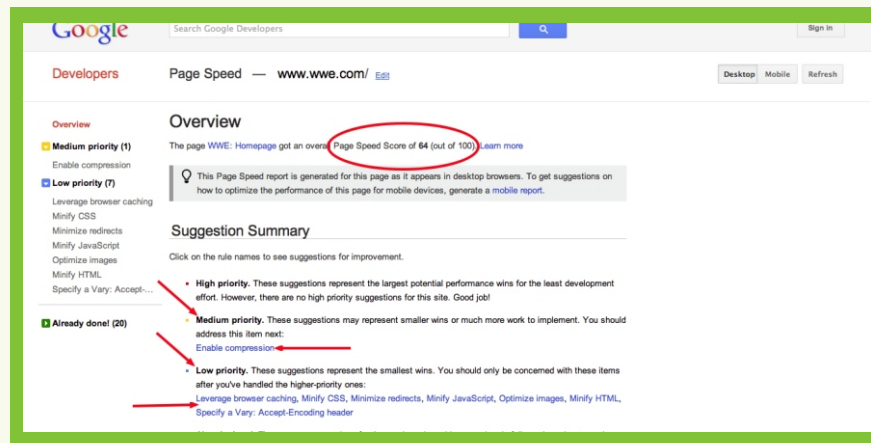The tool is really easy to use, here's how to utilize it.

**1** Go to https://developers.google.com/pagespeed/
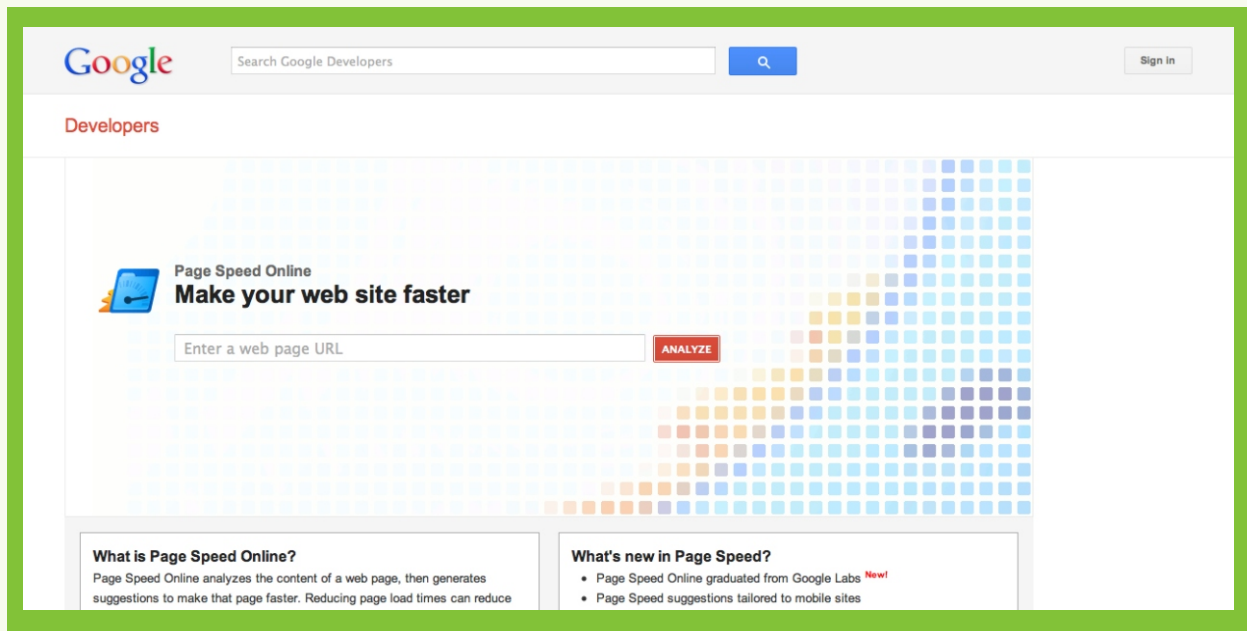


**2** Enter the URL you'd like to check

**3** Google now gives your page a score out of 100 and gives you recommendations to fix issues that are causing your page to load slower than possible. You will get a priority of the problem, what the problem is and how to fix it.



Now go fix those load times because they could be costing you serious money!

## Content

You have probably heard that content is king by now and in many ways that is true, but that content cannot be crap or you'll be susceptible to volatile algothrim changes that could end up virtually killing your website. Your content needs to be optimized as well as being unique and of great quality.

## Keyword Research

Keyword research is perhaps the most difficult and most important aspect of all of your SEO efforts. It is the basis on which you will make decisions on which keywords to target when you're crafting title tags and when deciding which keywords to target while creating content and link building. You can be more successful if your keyword research is done well, but you can lose a lot of time and progress if it is done incorrectly.

Let's look at how to kill it with your keyword research.

## Understanding Your Customers and How They Think...and Search

Keywords are tricky things because you'll find yourself being pulled in many different directions when trying to figure out which terms to target. You have to make sure you're going after keyword terms that people are searching for, terms that represent your business well, and, most importantly, terms that are going to drive traffic to your website that will convert.

You know your business better than anyone and you're an expert in your field so you would think you already know every keyword phrase that relates to your business and the words people should be using to find your business. Unfortunately, all too often that is not the case. The keyword phrases you would think are great for your business might not be at all what your potential customers are actually using to search. Sometimes your customers do not know what they want, or don't know what words are related to your industry. This is why conducting keyword research prior to beginning your SEO campaign is vital. The more you understand about what keywords are being used to search for your type of business, the better.

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## How To Conduct Keyword Research

The first step to successful keyword research is to become familiar with the website for which you are building keyword research. If this is for your own website, then you should already be familiar with the site and if you're not, GO DO IT NOW.

1. Generate a list of all the keywords related to your industry and your website. You will want to use Excel, or similar program, to list your keywords so you can sort them later on.

2. Once you have a good, solid list of keywords start to break the large list down into smaller lists. Each list should be more focused on a certain term or concept. For example, if you were generating a keyword document about athletic shoes you would want to start by breaking down your master list into smaller lists that are centered around a certain sport. So, a "basketball shoe" list and, "football shoe" list, etc. This is going to allow you to have a better grasp of your keywords and save time when it is time to apply your research to the different pages on your website.

3. Once you've broken your master list down into smaller lists, go through your lists and start to build those lists out further. Take your core keyword for each list and start to add other relevant terms to it. In our athletic shoe example you would take your "basketball shoe" list and build it out so it includes terms like, "signature basketball shoe", "cheap basketball shoe", "basketball shoes", "green basketball shoes", etc. Don't censor your keywords at this point, just add them as you think of them. Do this for each list you have.

4. Now that you have large, robust individual lists, it's time to start throwing out the terms and phrases that don't have anything to do with your website. Since you weren't censoring what you were adding to your lists you might have put in a term that makes no sense to your website like, "green basketball shoes for girls". Well, let's assume you don't have any green basketball shoes for girls. Eliminate this phrase. Try to get your lists lean and targeted.

5. You now have many small lists of relevant, targeted keywords that relate to your website. It is time to check the search volumes of those keyword phrases. We are going to use the Google Adwords Tool for this.

6. Adwords only lets you check search volume for up to 100 keyword phrases at a time, so start to add your lists one list at a time.

Let's take a break and look at the Google Adwords Tool and I'll explain how it works and what the information it returns means.

The Keyword Tool returns a variety of data including, "Global Search Volume", "Local Search Volume", and "Competition". Global Search Volume refers to an estimated number of times that particular keyword phrase has been searched for globally in the past 12 months. Local Search Volume is the estimated number of times the phase was searched in the country and region you are searching from. Competition refers to AdWords and the competition in terms of how competitive the bidding for that particular keyword phrase is. While Competition isn't purely organic searching, it can still give you an idea of how competitive the keyword is in general.

**7** Once you Google returns search volumes for your phrases, you need to change the "Match Type" to "Phrase" because right now Google Adwords Tool is returning data for "Broad". We want to use "Phrase" or "Exact" because that means Google is returning results closely related to our initial queries versus results for terms that are broadly matched, and not that targeted.

**8** Once you've changed your "Match Type" export the data to a .csv file for Excel.

**9** Now, import your Adwords data into your smaller lists of keywords so the corresponding Competition, Global and Local search volumes line up with the appropriate keywords.

**10** If some of the keyword phrases you initially put on your lists returned no search volumes then delete those keyword phrases from your lists. Then add in any new keyword phrases that you did not initially include but Google returned because they were related to your original list.

You now have a robust document that has targeted keywords that people are actually using in their searches. This isn't a static document though. It should be updated periodically to keep pace with your industry and its searching trends.

## Analyzing Your Keyword Document

Now that your keyword document is complete, you should spend some time familiarizing yourself with it. Are there terms you're seeing that you are surprised to see? Remember when I said that potential customers might be using terms you wouldn't think are applicable to your industry? Do you see some terms that you are surprised by the amount, whether large or small, of people searching a particular term? Hopefully this document is providing you some insights into your customers' minds.

## Your Keyword Document in Relation to Your SEO Strategy

These are the keywords you'll be using to develop your on-page SEO strategy. They will make up your Title Tags, be used to craft the content that occupies the pages of your website, used when link building, and when developing your brand. In other words, **THIS DOCUMENT IS IMPORTANT.** Do it right, spend time on it, and be thorough.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when applying your keyword research document to your SEO strategy:

## High Volume vs. Relevancy

Just because a keyword has a high search volume doesn't mean it's a good keyword to target. A high search volume keyword might get a lot of traffic but that traffic might not be the right kind of traffic for your website. You want targeted traffic that is likely to convert. Be sure the keywords you choose have a high probability of converting, not just driving aimless traffic.

## A Fight You Can't Win

High volume keyword phrases might be too competitive for you to go after. Some keyword phrases are just out of reach, at least for now. Rather than trying to compete with a website that has thousands of links, a strong brand, and a tons of social signals, aim for "low hanging fruit" to start. Go after easier keywords that are valuable and that you can rank for quickly.

A great way check on the competiveness of a keyword phrase is plug it into Google and search it. Of the returned results, what kind of sites come up? Are the top results taken by mega-brands? If so, it's probably going to be hard to beat them. If the SERPs aren't dominated by well-known brands it doesn't mean there isn't high competition so you will want to analyze the top sites' Title Tags .

For example, let's say you have a website for your surfing lessons business in California. An obvious keyword phrase you would probably want to explore is "surfing lessons in California". So you use the Keyword Tool to see if there is any volume for it, and there is. Now let's see how competitive this keyword is.

Here are the top 5 results for "surfing lessons in California",

By examining the Title Tags of the top 5 results, we can determine how difficult it will be to compete for "surfing lessons in California". Notice how only results #2 and #3 are targeting "surfing lessons California"? Results #1, #4 and #5 aren't even optimized for "surfing lessons in California" but they returned for it nonetheless. With a well optimized Title Tag, and some high quality links all using the phrase "surfing lessons in California", you should have a good shot at out ranking some of these sites.

## The Long Tail Is Where the Conversion are Where the Money is
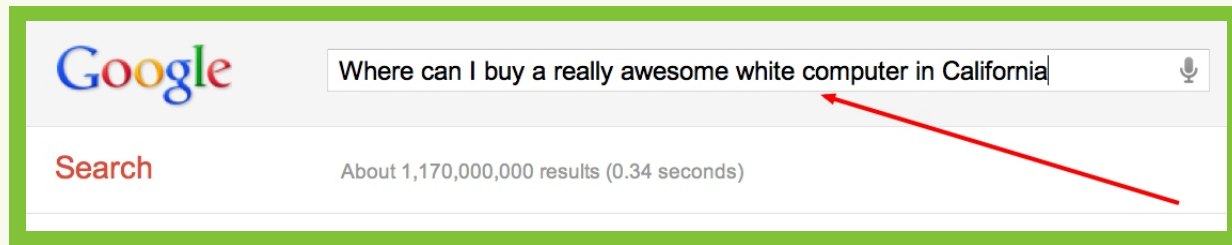


Be aware of the power of the long-tail keyword phrases. The longer and more descriptive a search query is, the more likely the searcher is farther along in the purchase or conversion process. A good example of this is someone searching for "computer" versus someone searching for "15 inch laptop with 4 gigs of ram". Who do you think is closer to actually buying a computer? Find descriptive keywords that have low competition but high search volumes.

QUICKSPROUT

# OFF-PAGE SEO

## What is Off-Page SEO?

Off-page SEO is the practice of, well, optimizing your Search Engine Strategy off of your website. Confused? Well, don't worry it's actually quite simple in theory, but more difficult in practice.

Search engines use a number of signals when ranking websites. These signals include social signals like "Likes" and "Tweets", all of the on-page elements we previously discussed, and finally off-page signals like links back to your website. It is believed that links are the strongest signal that your website is an authority on a particular subject, thus deserving of a high rank. So, links are extremely important to the success of your website.

But how the heck do you get people to link to your website? That is the difficult part, and that is where the art of *link building* comes into play and you're about to become a master link builder.

## 3 Types of Link Building
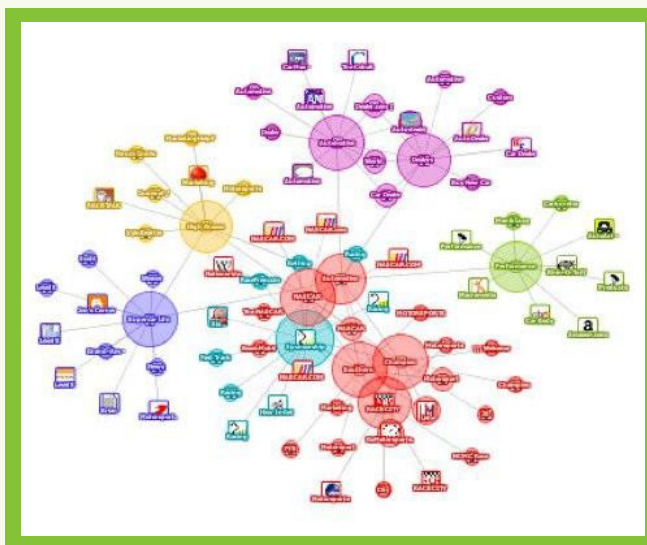


I like to categorize link building into three main types: manual, automated, and viral. The names are fairly self-explanatory but the methods to successfully execute each type are not. This guide focuses on manual and viral link building.

## Manual Link Building

Manual link building can often be difficult because it takes a great amount of effort, creativity, and perseverance to succeed at it.

Some common manual link building tactics include:

▸ Email Link Requests          ▸ Guest Blogging

▸ Directory Submissions         ▸ Ethical Link Buying

▸ Blog Commenting

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All of these tactics can be great link building methods if done correctly. Here are some tips for making a killing with manual link building.

## Send Out Emails

It is painful to send out emails asking for a links, but it's really effective. If someone is linking to your competition, they'll probably be willing to link to you. A great way to find out who is linking to your competitors is to do a competitive backlink analysis on all of your competitors. Use advanced search operators like **link:** "your competitors website url" to find all the links that Google has indexed for that website. Once you have a list of websites that are linking to you competitors you can contact them and see if they'll link to you.

All you have to do is send that website owner an email like this:

*Hi John,*

*I know you don't know me, but name is Neil Patel and I.m with [KISSmetrics](). I noticed that you link to a few of my competitors such as Omniture, so I thought I would take a shot in the dark to see if you would be willing to link to us as well.*

*Don't worry, KISSmetrics isn't another me-too analytics solution, which is why your website readers will see value in us. Unlike some of the other solutions in the market place, KISSmetrics allows you to track, optimize, and improve your conversion funnels with a simple and easy to use report.*

*Thanks for taking the time to read this email.*
*Have a great day,*
*Neil*

If you need help finding out who you should be emailing take to Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn. Use these services to search out your niche and industry and find the thought leaders and game changers in it. Make a list of all the people in your niche who you feel would be interested in what you have to say and can help you. Make sure your list is detailed with names, emails, companies, when you last contacted each person, and what their response was. This will help you track your success and failures and give you opportunities to capitalize.

## Directory Submissions

Directory submissions have recently gotten a bad rap and might not have the same weight they used to when it comes to link juice they pass, but including directory submissions in your link profile is vital to have a well-balanced, naturally-appearing link profile.

For the best results and return on investment of your time with directory submissions, seek out high quality, relevant directories in your niche. Try to avoid submitting your website to "catch all" types of directories that will accept any link. These links don't offer much value and, if in large quantities, can harm your website.

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To find relevant directories utilize advanced search operators and Google. For example, let's say you have a rock climbing website and need some directories that are in your niche, you could use this search query,

*allintittle: sports directory*
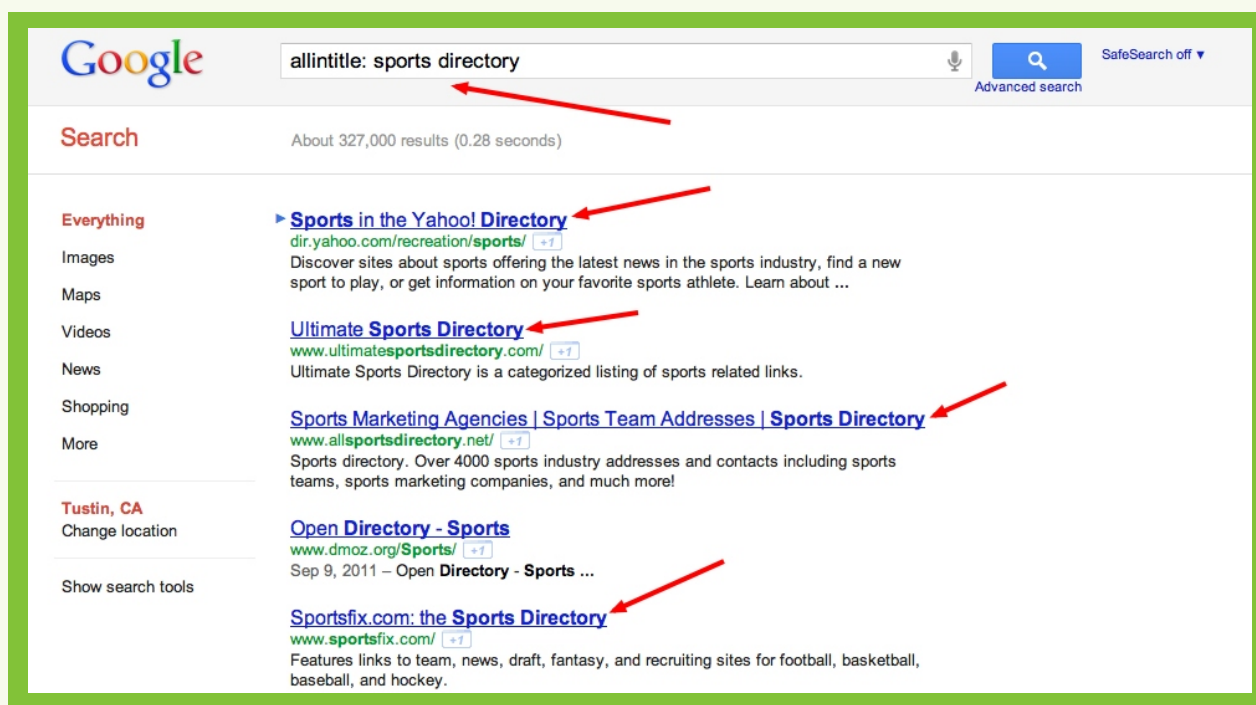


This is a great way to find relevant directories to whatever niche you're a part of, just swap out "sports" for a good keyword for industry and start searching results.

## Ethical Link Purchasing



I know what you are going to say, buying links is frowned upon, right? And yes, you are right, you don't want to hit up a website and ask them if they will sell you a link.

But what you can do is spend money on content and then give that content away for free. The best example of this are infographics as you can create good ones for $500 and email popular bloggers to see if they want exclusive rights to it as long as they link back.

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Popular blogs like Guy Kawasaki and Mashable seem to be willing to post infographics created by other companies and if you happen to get a link from one of their sites you'll be getting a very authoritative link.

When using this strategy, you have to understand that you can't just create crap content and expect others to pick it up. If you create good information and just email popular bloggers, there is an extremely high chance that you can get a link from high Pagerank blog for $500.

## Link Buying

You can also buy links from websites. This practice is somewhat risky in that Google does look down on and you can get penalized if you do get caught buying links, but you can do it intelligently and minimize the risks. When buying links you want to be very selective in which sites you purchase links from. Look for sites that sell links on homepages and blogs like Digital-Point Forums.Cost should not be more than $50 to $100 for a PR 4 or higher link.

When buying links, you should avoid:

- ▸ Sites that say they sell links (disclosures)
- ▸ sites that link out to too many other sites (ex: 50 plus percent of the links on their site are to outside sites - don't use this rule for directory sites)
- ▸ sites that link or discuss topics that aren't relevant to your site
- ▸ sites that utilize the default Wordpress themes
- ▸ sites that discuss spammy topics like gambling or adult related content

Make sure the sites you're purchasing links from look legitimate and aren't just using a default wordpress theme. Also be sure the content they have on the website is quality information and useful.

The easiest way to get caught buying links is to buy links from websites that are of poor quality and not run correctly.

## Sponsored Reviews

Sponsored reviews are an excellent way to get credible, high quality links. Using a service like Sponsored Reviews will allow you to request that respectable bloggers use your product, service or website and then write an honest review on it. There are also built in tools that help you choose the best blogs for your money by using filters to sort through different filters like if the blog is cached, how much traffic the blog gets, etc.

Some advantages to using sponsored reviews are:

- ▸ Access to thousands of bloggers who are willing to write about your product
- ▸ High-quality, Do-Follow Link
- ▸ Exposure

A sponsored review can cost you between $5 and $1000 per post, so there is an opportunity for every budget.

You should use sponsored reviews for any of the following reasons:

- ▸ Build quality traffic to your website

- ▸ Launch a new product or service

- ▸ Build high quality links to your website

Be sure that you are having the blogger using quality anchor text's for links back to your website. These anchor text's should be keywords that you are targeting for the respective pages that are being linked too. You should also suggest that the blogger link out to other high-authority sites in your niche to take advantage of link blending tactics. Ask the blogger to use relevant links to .edu or another website that is in the top 100 results in Google for your niche. This will help increase the quality of link juice and power that you get from the link back to your website in the sponsored review.

## Blog Commenting
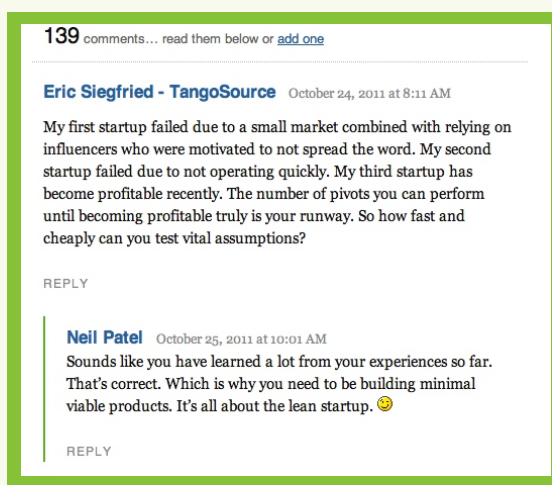


Blog commenting is extremely time consuming, yet can be worth your effort. The best strategy to utilize when blog commenting is to be genuine, helpful ,and consistent. If you're going to leave a comment on a blog post, genuinely read the post and put together a thoughtful comment. DO NOT SPAM blogs with comments that offer nothing of value, it's a quick way to build the reputation as a spammer. If you don't have anything helpful or valuable to add to the conversation then either think of something or don't comment. Also, be consistent with your responses across blogs. There is a good chance your niche is quite small when it comes to the blogging community surrounding it, so don't go bashing something on one blog and praising it on another. Blog commenting is more about you developing yourself as a helpful member of the community rather than scoring link juice from a comment.

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# 10 Simple Steps to Better Photoshop Performance

By Guest Author | August 13th, 2009 | Performance, Photoshop | 91 Comments

Guest blogging is a excellent way to build great links back to your website, develop yourself as an authority in your field, and build great relationships with other powerful figures in your industry. Remember, that landing great guest blogging opportunities is more about relationships than it is about SEO. You are dealing with another human being when it comes to guest blogging, not a bot or a directory. You will have to be genuine in your proposal to guest blog and really offer some value to the blogger who is hosting it. I've guest blogged on some of the biggest websites in tech and marketing and all of those opportunities happened because of relationships I've built over the years.

If you're just starting out, it's probably not feasible to cold email the biggest blogger in your arena and expect a response but you can grab some "low hanging fruit" and build from there.

MyBlogGuest Is a great website where bloggers and writers can meet up and discuss blogging opportunities. You can browse the website and view different blogs that need guest blogs in tons of different niches. Once you find a good opportunity, just shoot the blogger an email or private message and propose you write a blog for them.

A great pitch might sound something like,

*"Hi Jeff,*

*My name is Neil Patel and I saw you were interested in some guest blog posts discussing social media. I'd love to contribute.*

*Would you be interested in a blog post discussing social media's impact on search engine optimization? The title could be,*

*'Social Media and Its Impact on SEO'*

*I am an experienced blogger with experience in social media and SEO so I can put something together for your blog.*

*Let me know if you're interested and I can put it together and get it over to you.*

*Thanks for your time."*

See how genuine that was? I was honest, offered something of value to his site and let him know my experience and why I would be a great fit for the job. You can think of this like a cover letter for a job application.

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Once you get comfortable with some of the easier blogging opportunities and have some great published content online, start aiming for the more popular blogs an soon you'll be getting requests from blogs for you to write for them!

## Using Advanced Search Operators for Link Building



Like mentioned in the directory submission section, using advanced search operators can be a great way to comb through Google's massive amounts of links and websites to find potential link sources. Here are some helpful search operators can save you time and find you great places for links

**Inachor:"keyword"**

What this command is doing is asking Google return all the websites with links pointing to them with that keyword as an anchor text. This is an excellent way to find websites with relevant topics that you can potentially reach out to for a link. Once your find a website that is relevant and you feel is valuable to you send an email like I described earlier in the manual link building section.

**Intitle:"keyword"**

This operator will return pages that have your keyword in the title tag which means this website is also a potential link opportunity. Send out a custom email to the blog owner or editor. Let them know about your website and how it might be beneficial to their website if they linked back to your website. Always be ready to provide a reason WHY another site would want to link to your site. Make mention of what that website has to gain by linking back to you.

**Inurl:"keyword"**

This operator is going to show you websites that contain your keyword in the url. This is an excellent way to find a "links" or "resources" page on a website.

Try, **Inurl:"links"** or **Inurl:"resources"** to find thousands of pages with whole sections of their site dedicated to links.

But the way to get the real value and gold out of our advanced search operators is to combine them to find very specific and targeted websites.

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For example, I am trying to find websites in Google that are linking to rocking climbing websites. First, I'll try to find rock climbing websites with "links" or "resources" pages.

I'll use this to search,

**Inurl:"links" Intitle:"rock climbing"**
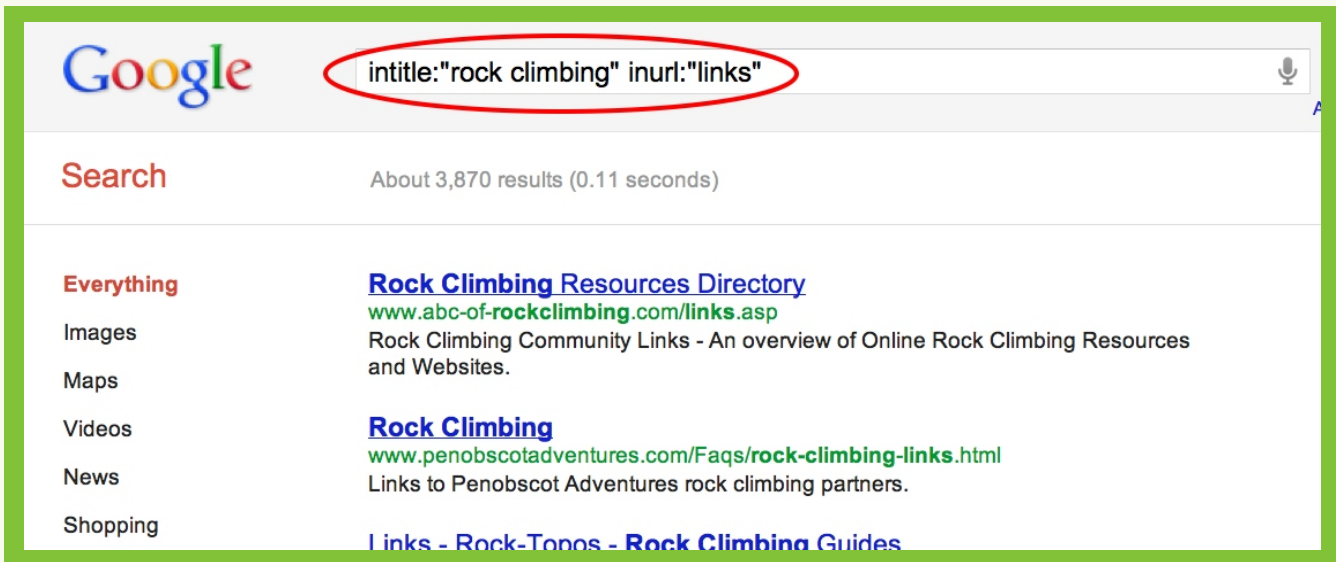


Now I'll have all the websites that have "rocking climbing" in their title and have pages that have "links" in their url.

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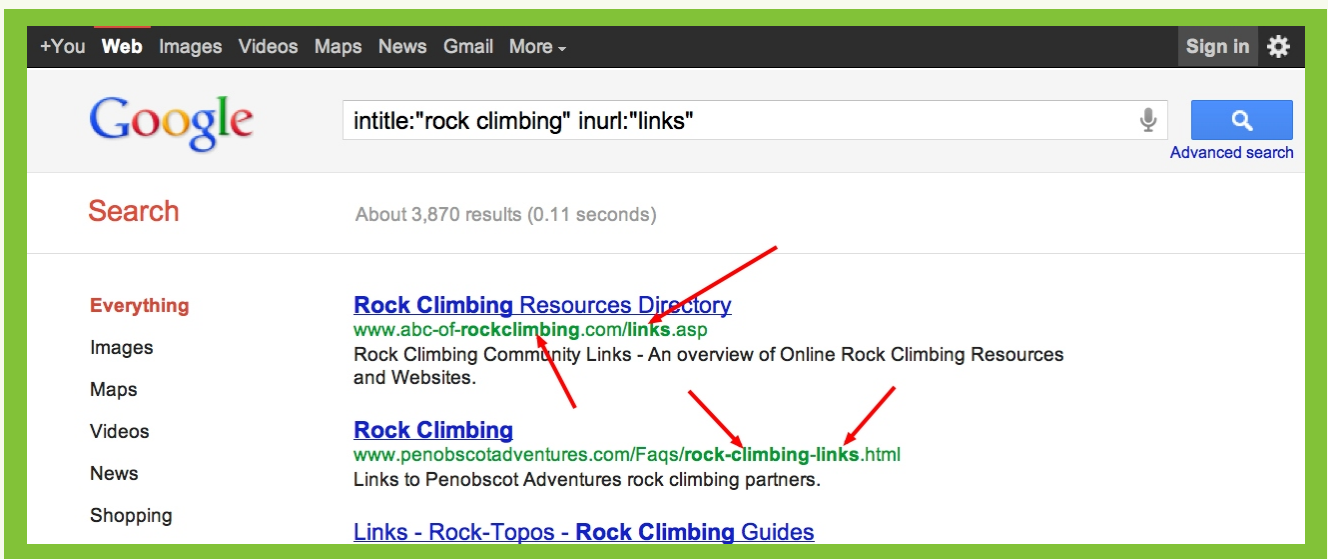
Within seconds I have thousands of linking possibilities. Now I'll send an email to each website that I feel can provide value to me, and might potentially link back to me. This does take a lot of time, to craft an email and personalize it, but I can pay off big time.

I can also hire an intern to do the work for. If I pay the intern $10 bucks an hour and get 10 or 15 links out of every 100 emails sent every 8 hours each link works out to about $6.77 to $10. It would be smart to keep track of which websites you email, which operator and keyword combination you used to find it and the websites response to your email. This way you can save time by not reaching out to the same website twice.

There are many search operators at your disposal, so explore combinations of operators and keywords to keep uncovering linking potential.

## Viral Link Building

In comparison to manual link building where there isn't as much prep work to do, viral link building is all about preparation and creating amazing content without actually having a formal request to do it. Viral link building is creating a piece of "link bait" or content that people want to link to. In theory, you create great content and people will link to it and then others will see those links and link to you as well, thus the viral nature.

Creating this link bait or content that will go viral is not an easy task. It has to be interesting and captivating as well as funny, scary, shocking, or informative. It really has to have that wow factor.

A great type of link bait I have had success with is creating infographics to use with KISSmetrics. Our infographics have thousands of links, Tweets, and Likes. People love to share infographics because they take possibly boring information and make it digestible using colors, graphics, images, and style. Our infographics have turned normally boring things like page load times into a fun, shocking, and informative graphics that people can't get enough of.

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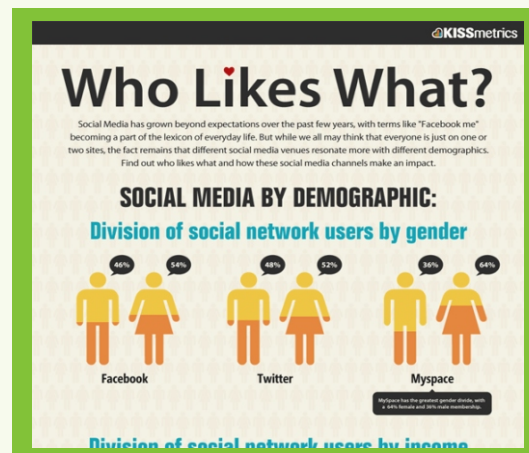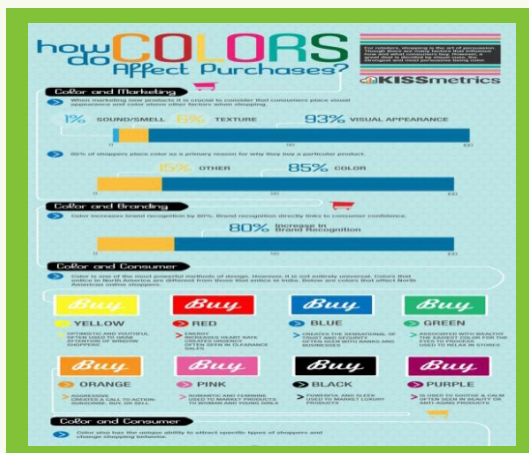
Some great types of other viral content that you should experiment are:

- Lists

- Funny or controversial pictures

- Videos

- Tools or widgets

- eBooks

- How to guides

All of these forms of content can spread like wildfire online if the content is great and you push it out to the right channels like Twitter, Facebook and other niche communities.

It is also important that you make this content easily shareable. If you create a killer infographic make sure you do the following to increase the odds of it being shared:

- Offer the graphic on your website in multiple sizes

- Include an embeddable html code that makes it easy for others to put on their websites.

- Include social sharing options like a Twitter, Like and Share button.

- Email all your friends, family and colleagues about the graphic and ask them to share it.

- Submit the graphic to various social sites like Hacker News and Reddit

## Using Humor To Get Links

People love to laugh, and people love to share the laughter with their friends. This is why humor and funny content online can generate thousands of links and spread like wild fire. You find something funny while at work, share it with a coworker via email, he then shares it with his Twitter followers, who then share it with theirs, then it makes it's way to Facebook and eventually you've got more links then you could dream of! Of course, creating that kind of content isn't easy, but it can be done.

Take a look at The Oatmeal.

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This one comic strip has over 5k Tweets, nearly 2k +1's and over 96,000 Facebooks likes.

If you can create a something that is funny, that is easy to share, and easily relatable to your audience, you can get some major backlinks. Experiment with videos, comics, pictures, editorials, Twitter accounts, or Facebook posts. Find something that works and run with it.

## Avoid Anchor Text Perfection All the Time
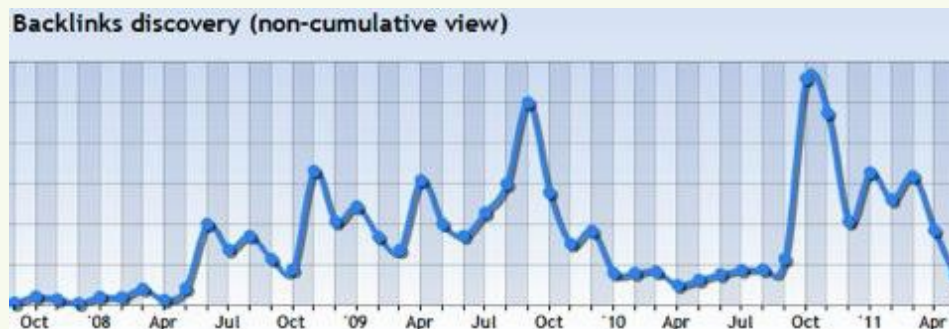
The best way to boost your rankings is to build rich anchor text links. For example, if my startup KISSmetrics wants to rank well for the term "web analytics" I need to get other websites to link to KISSmetrics.

When convincing these sites to link to me, I ideally want them to link with the phrase *web analytics* as the link text instead of my company name, KISSmetrics.
If more people link to you with the keyword you want to rank for as the anchor text of the link, your rankings will start sky rocketing for that keyword.

But what you may not know is that if you get too many links that are rich in anchor text, your rankings will drastically drop after a while. So, you have to rotate the anchor text up and ideally make it natural.

In essence, having rich anchor text is good, but it can't be too rich. I usually try to keep my anchor text rich for less than 10% of my links.

A great way to avoid having too perfect anchor text is take your main keyword you are link building for and to vary the phrase slightly when building different links so that you have a lot of links that appears more natural.

For example, say you are building links for the term "healthy hamburgers in San Francisco" for a fast food joint in San Francisco. You should build out a list of your keyword, but with variations. You can utilize a wide variety of anchor text over the course of your link building campaign like "healthy burgers in San Francisco", "San Francisco Healthy Hamburgers", "healthy hamburgers in the Bay Area", and so on. Once you have a good list of variations, start to build links for one keyword phrase, building them slowly.

Once you have a good amount of links for that particular keyword phrase move onto the next phrase. Cycle through all your phrases so that over a period of time you have a good amount of links built with a wide variety of anchor text. Make sure you are using your main keyword phrase, "healthy hamburgers in San Francisco" on the most valuable sites, while using your variations on less powerful sites.

## Building Links to Important Pages

Your homepage is important, but having 100% of your links to your homepage is really unnatural.

I personally try to make sure that 80% of my links, if not more, are going to internal pages. And the best way to do this is to make sure your internal pages have really good content.

What you will notice when your internal pages start to get more links, the ranking of your homepage will also start going up. It is because search engines do not just try to evaluate where you should rank on a page-by-page basis, but they also look at your website as a whole. This is why sites like About.com and Wikipedia rank for millions of terms.

A great way to figure out what your most important internal pages are is to dig deep into your analytics. Here's how to do it:

1 Go to your Google Analytics page

2 Access "Content" dashboard

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**3** Then hit "Site Content"

**4** You can now view your site's content broken down into the amount of traffic each page gets.

**5** You can either determine how important a page is by the amount of traffic it gets or how many conversions the page assists in.

Stay away from all page links. Although they can easily be bought, it's unnatural that someone would link to your website from every page unless you have a blog (for example, blogrolls).

I know doing the things I mentioned above may not get you to the same link count as your competition, but you will start increasing your rankings drastically. Don't fall into the trap of building links quickly.

Although your rankings will go up in the short run, it's hard to maintain your rankings once you get to the top. You'll start noticing way too many fluctuations compared to if you built relevant links slowly.

## Spying on Your Competitors Links

What better way to find websites that are willing to link to websites in your niche then exploring the links your competitors have already gotten? A competitive link analysis can be a great way to score extra links, forge new relationships and get an idea of your competitor's strategy.

Here are a few advanced search operators that can help you do a competitive link analysis on your competitors.

## Link: "competitor's website url"

This simple search operator will give you a great list of links that Google has indexed that point to your competitors website. Simply use this operator and start to analyze the types of links your competitors are earning.

Look for the type of sites they are getting links on, the keyword used in the anchor text and try to figure out how they got those links. Did they request them? Did produce a piece of content that was great enough that the website link to them on their own? Are the links in the body of the website or in the footer or sidebar?

Generate a list of all the links your competitors have gotten that you want to target as well, then set out to get links from the same places. If you find a website linking to your competitor, email the webmaster and ask them if they'd consider linking to your website because your website is such a great resource.

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# SEO TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## Keyword Tools

**Google Keyword Tool** - This is a great free keyword tool that you can use for your keyword research. After you have created your keyword lists, use Google's keyword tool to find your keywords search volume and competition. Use this information to determine a keywords value and determine which you should go after.



**Alexa.com** - Alexa can provide some great information on which keywords are sending traffic to a website, and how much traffic each keyword is sending to that site. This is great for getting an insight into what is working for your competitors in terms of driving traffic through keyword phrases.

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**Soovle.com** - This is a great free keyword tool that will give you the autosuggested terms for multiple search engines including google, bing, wiki and more all on the same screen. Use this tool to generate keyword ideas early in your keyword research phase.
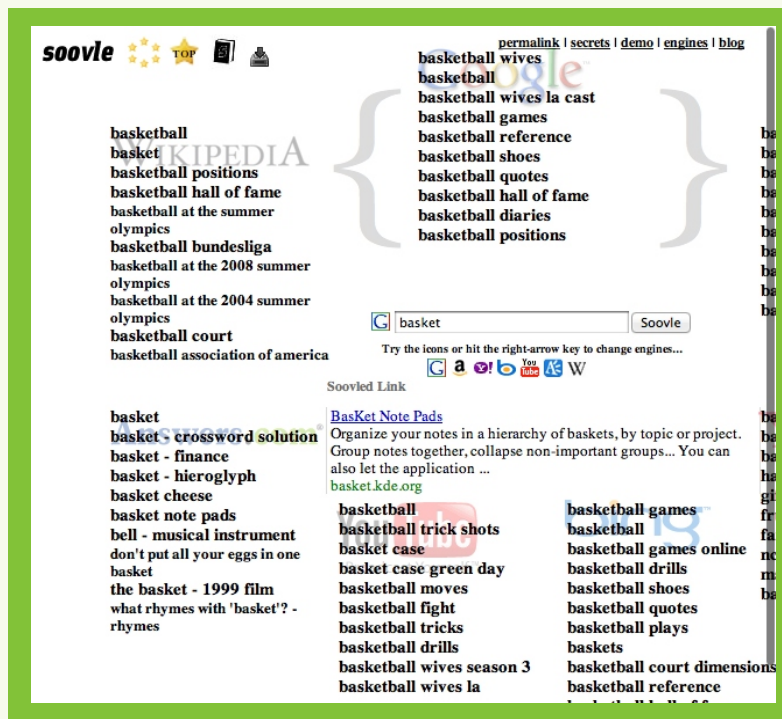


**SEMRush** - SEMRush offers a great tool that allows you to enter a domain and then find information on the top 10 keywords that the website ranks for. It will display their positions, traffic percentages, competition and more. This can be great for spying on your competition and finding out which keywords they are going after.



## Research Tools

**Google Trends and Insights** - Use these two Google tools to determine what topics are hot and to follow popular trends. This can be valuable when writing or crafting blog content.
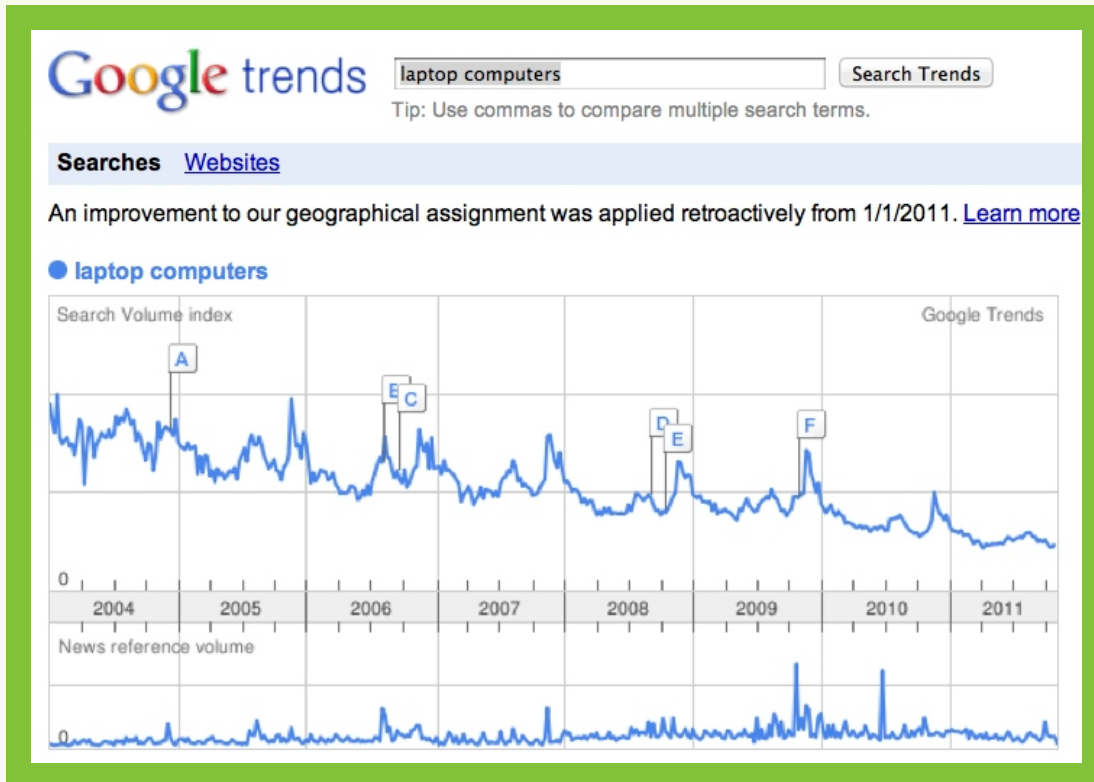
## Link Building Tools

**Zemanta** - Zemanta is a service that helps you create blog posts and get those blog posts in front of other bloggers face who might link to you. You can use Zemanta in a number of ways, like a Wordpress plugin. Once you have the plugin installed and activated Zemanta will start to suggest tags, links, photos and related articles to help you craft your blog posts as you write. It's really great for saving you time when creating a blog post because all this is done through your Wordpress Dashboard. Another great advantage of Zemanta is that all the images are vetted for copyright and can be drag and dropped into your blog posts.

Once you have a great blog post put together Zemanta will help you link to your other blog posts to improve interlinking on your site. But the best part of Zemanta is when the tool starts to suggest your content to other bloggers and they end up linking to your blog posts. Even though this part of Zemanta isn't free, a lot of the tools and services they offer are. If you use Zemanta to build links the average link comes out to about $10 per link even though you are charged per impression, not per link.

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**Open Site Explorer -** Open Site Explorer is SEOmoz's index of the web. Open Site Explorer can offer you very indepth link metrics, link profiles and social metrics that can be invaluable to your link building campaigns.

SEOmoz offers a whole suite of tools including Open Site Explorer that can help you track SEO campaigns, link build, and optimize your website. It is definitely worth checking out.

**SEOmoz**  - SEOmoz has a great suite of seo tools including the great Open Site Expolerer which is a deep index of the entire web that can provide valuable link metrics that can lead to amazing linking possibilities. Use Open Site Explorer to figure out who is linking to your competitors, then put together a master list of those possible opportunities. Include information like domain authority, MOZrank and MOZtrust and sort them by which would be most valuable. Then go after those linking opportunities.

**Google Search Operators**  - Like I discussed previous in this guide, Search Operators are great for digging deep into Google's results and getting specific types of results. Use operators like **site:, inurl, link:** and **intitle** to narrow down results to make your linking acquiring easier and more efficient.

**MyBlogGuest and Sponsored Reviews**  - Both these websites and services are great for getting valuable links and coverage in blogs. Use MyblogGuest to find opportunities to write guest blog posts for other blogs where you can include optimized anchor text links back to your website. Remember to try to write for blogs in a related niche to the website they will be linking back to for maximum linking benefits.

Use sponsored reviews to get other bloggers to write about your products which will include valuable links to your website. These aren't usually free, but can be really worth the time and money, just pick high quality blogs and make sure you work with the blogger to optimize the anchor text.

**Directories** - Use Directories sparingly and focus on ones that will provide value. To determine if it will provide value, verify that is offers "do follow" back links, have a high PR, directories focusing on your niche and directories that tend to not just accept just any website. Here is small list of some good directories to explore:

dir.yahoo.com

botw.org

http://www.ipl.org/

http://www.stpt.com/directory/

https://secure.business.com/crm/signup/promo.do?promo=ADIFIF

http://www.americasbest.com/

http://www.joeant.com/

http://www.jayde.com/

http://www.mavicanet.com/

http://www.cannylink.com/


**Check My Links**  - This plugin for Chrome will scan every link on any web page and tell you which links are broken. This can be used to identify broken links on web pages that you would like to have a link on. To make the most of the tool, find websites that you want a link on. Scan the web site with the tool and then email the web master letting him know that a specific link is broken and offer him a good alternative for the broken link by suggesting your website. This can be time consuming so you might want to consider outsourcing this task to an intern who can do this for a few hours to maximize your results.

**Excel & Google Docs -** Both Excel and Google Docs can be great tools for sorting data and pulling data from websites using scraping tools. Both require some knowledge with how Excel or Google Docs works but are easy enough to learn and provide some great results. You can explore Excel uses for SEOs here, and the same for Google Docs here.

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# SEO PLAN OF ACTION

You've now got all the SEO tools and skills you need to get going on your optimization campaign. Here is your plan of action to crushing the rankings!

**STEP 1** ▶ **Audit**

Before you get to actively building links or optimizing your on page content you need to figure out where you page stands. Take note of your analytics traffic and which pages you'd like to see increased traffic, as well as which conversions you want to see increased.

**STEP 2** ▶ **Research**

Research will be the basis of your campaigns so do it well. Research your keywords, your competitors, your niche market, trends and insights. Use tools like Google's keyword tool, Alexa and advanced search operators to decide on which keywords you should target for on page optimization and where your competitors are getting links, and how you can score the same links.

Build out robust keyword lists with multiple silos focusing on targeted terms that you feel you can rank well on and will provide value to your business

**STEP 3** ▶ **On-Page Optimization**

Once you have a set of terms you're comfortable with start to optimize your on page content and meta information for your website. Concentrate first on title tags, meta descriptions and getting your pages load times under control. Remember to keep the keywords you use in your title tags targeted to the content on the page. Use unique value propositions and calls to actions with your meta descriptions. Keep your page load times as low as possible to keep users on your pages and to not get your site dinged in the search engines. Make sure every page has a unique title tag and meta description and has unique content.

Make sure you are creating valuable, high quality content for every page of your website. Web pages with great content are more likely to be linked to and will rank higher in the rankings.

**STEP 4** ▶ **Off Page Optimization**

During your research phase of your SEO campaign you should have identified where your competitors are earning links and how they are acquiring them. Now that you have your website's optimization under control it is time to start building links to your web pages. Start to build links back to your website using the various methods outlined in this guide.

Build a variety of links using a wide variety of anchor texts to different pages on your website with various tools like SEOmoz, directories, guest blogging, viral content, etc. Keep track of where you are building links, which anchor texts you are using and the rankings of your pages as you continue to build links.

Remember not to build too many links to any one page of your site using the same anchor text to avoid building an unnatural looking link profile.

**Measure and Monitor**

Once you've got your on and off page campaigns rolling be sure you are monitor your analytics. Monitor traffic to your website, sales, goals completed, keyword rankings, etc. Monitor and measure everything. SEO is not a .set it and forget it.. It evolves and needs constant tweaking to keep it on track, so be sure you are staying on top of your SEO efforts.