

Niche Site Project Management

A Complete Guide to Creating an Amazon Associate Website Using Project Management Methodology



By Doug Cunningham of NicheSiteProject.com

Disclaimer: I make no claims about how much money you will make (or lose) following this guide, nor are there claims that this process will work for you at all. It is impossible to predict success like any other business venture.

I can tell you that I personally put a tremendous amount of effort and spent a lot of time strategizing this process in hopes of a “win.” It is a risky business model with plenty of challenges along the way. In the end, it worked for me, and it’s worked for many other people that have followed this same model. Read more about the Success Stories at [Niche Pursuits](#).

In addition, this guide contains affiliate links throughout and I will receive money if you buy through those links. Some of the links allow you to get a discount but in other cases you will be paying the same price as a

regular customer - you will never have to pay more by following the affiliate links. Thanks a bunch if you do use one of the affiliate links!

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Table Of Contents

Introduction..... i

Part 1: Creating a Niche Website.....1

Overview.....1

Planning4

Keyword and Product Research9

First Page Competition Analysis..... 20

Buying a Domain and Hosting 26

Content Creation 31

Promotion, Link Building, and Outreach 48

Ranking Checkpoint..... 60

Adding More Content 64

Optimizing for Conversion..... 66

Backlink Profile Analysis & Advanced Link Building..... 69

Link Building with Private Blog Networks..... 73

Part 2: A Primer on Project Management 82

Conclusion..... 91

Ways to connect with me 93

Resources 94

Glossary..... 95

Introduction

My Story

I first heard about Niche Pursuits after listening to Episode 66 of Pat Flynn's Smart Passive Income Podcast - Spencer Haws was the guest. I found the ideas, concepts, and implementation of niche websites very intriguing.

In just a couple of days, I found Niche Pursuits and read everything I could and downloaded all the podcasts. I was hooked, and checked out several other blogs, podcasts, and videos on YouTube.

Very excited to begin, I created a couple websites that flopped. They were plagued by poor keyword research.

My goal was an AdSense site making \$1 a day. I did learn a lot along the way, most importantly that I needed to move on to a new, more profitable project.

Right about this time, Spencer was kicking off his first niche site project - the famous Best Survival Knife Guide Site. I thought it was awesome and started creating my own Amazon Associate site.

I bought the domain on July 14th and started writing that day. After a week, the site had 10 articles and a 2500 word front page post.

The first few sales came in August and the site made

\$20. Things started to get moving in September with revenue of \$500. In October the revenue jumped to \$1,270. The revenue for November was \$2,700, and in December the revenue climbed to over \$6,200.



Check out the earnings for September, October, November, and December of 2013 on the next page.

Earnings Report Totals Glossary			
September 1, 2013 to September 30, 2013			
	Items Shipped	Revenue	Advertising Fees
Total Amazon.com Items Shipped	80	\$4,612.33	\$322.05
Total Third Party Items Shipped 	43	\$2,576.25	\$178.26
Total Items Shipped	123	\$7,188.58	\$500.31
Total Items Returned	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Refunds	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL ADVERTISING FEES	123	\$7,188.58	\$500.31

Note: The money that you will earn is the Advertising Fees. Amazon reports these numbers from their perspective. Revenue is their revenue, and Advertising Fees are the Advertising Fees that Amazon owes to you!

Earnings Report Totals Glossary			
October 1, 2013 to October 31, 2013			
	Items Shipped	Revenue	Advertising Fees
Total Amazon.com Items Shipped	222	\$10,327.88	\$763.19
Total Third Party Items Shipped 	105	\$6,948.52	\$507.09
Total Items Shipped	327	\$17,276.40	\$1,270.28
Total Items Returned	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Refunds	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL ADVERTISING FEES	327	\$17,276.40	\$1,270.28

Earnings Report Totals Glossary			
November 1, 2013 to November 30, 2013			
	Items Shipped	Revenue	Advertising Fees
Total Amazon.com Items Shipped	420	\$23,149.87	\$1,806.00
Total Third Party Items Shipped ⓘ	218	\$11,977.23	\$925.47
Total Items Shipped	638	\$35,127.10	\$2,731.47
Total Items Returned	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Refunds	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL ADVERTISING FEES	638	\$35,127.10	\$2,731.47

Earnings Report Totals Glossary			
December 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013			
	Items Shipped	Revenue	Advertising Fees
Total Amazon.com Items Shipped	962	\$49,925.86	\$3,904.24
Total Third Party Items Shipped ⓘ	541	\$31,227.52	\$2,389.44
Total Items Shipped	1503	\$81,153.38	\$6,293.68
Total Items Returned	-3	-\$176.30	-\$7.06
Total Refunds	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL ADVERTISING FEES	1500	\$80,977.08	\$6,286.62

Why the Amazon Associate Program?

People trust Amazon. I personally make most of my purchases on Amazon. The prices are fantastic. The supply chain is nothing short of remarkable. Also, I'm not a huge fan of a crowded retail store, so shopping on Amazon just works for me - and a LOT of other people agree.

Amazon has a very high **conversion**, anecdotally almost double the average conversion rate of other online sales.

We can expect ~3-6% conversion rate from people that click over to Amazon when we have highly targeted traffic. I am thrilled with my conversion rate, which is remaining steady at ~6%.

What about AdSense?

AdSense is a great program and can be a good first step into the niche website realm. AdSense might be the only way to monetize some niches, but in other cases it is not the most profitable option. The Amazon Associate program is a great compromise between AdSense and selling your own products.

How to Use This Guide

The organization of each chapter is: an introduction paragraph, the main content, and a summary. Some chapters have checklists or exercises to complete.

- The introduction to each chapter provides an overview of the chapter.
- The main content discusses the details of the topic.
- The summary restates the most important topics in the chapter.
- The checklists and exercises are tools to use while working on your affiliate niche site project. They will help you understand when you are ready to move to the next phase of the process to ensure success.

TIP: From Amazon: The Conversion is the number of items shipped divided by the number of clicks on your links, expressed as a percentage.

For example, if your links got 100 clicks and those referrals generated 6 shipped items, then your conversion would be $6/100 = 0.06$, or 6%

This is an example of a tip box.

There are **Tip Boxes** throughout the guide to highlight important points.

The keyword research section uses a case study – a real, untapped niche – so look forward to that in the text.

Part 1 of the book will cover creating a niche site.

Part 2 of the book is a primer on project management and will follow the niche site content. We will discuss getting organized with a task list and project plan. Then, we cover the topic of risk management.

Part 1: Creating a Niche Website Overview

Before we begin in detail, let's familiarize ourselves with the phases of creating a niche site from start to finish. The timeline on the next page shows the relationship of the phases.

Phases

Planning - Define and refine the objectives, and plan the course of action to achieve the objectives for your Niche Site.

Keyword and Product Research - A critical component of the process that forms the foundation of your niche site project. In this phase you identify candidates for the overall subject matter of your Niche Site.

First Page Competition Analysis - Goes hand in hand with keyword research and has the power to dictate the success of your website. This helps narrow down your potential keywords based on the overall competition.

Buying a Domain and Hosting - Setting up the online real estate for your new website.

Content Creation - Creating your original content, including the critical front page and your initial set of product reviews.

Amazon Associates- Applying to the Amazon Associates program, and once accepted, adding the Affiliate Links. The links direct your visitors to the products they want to purchase.

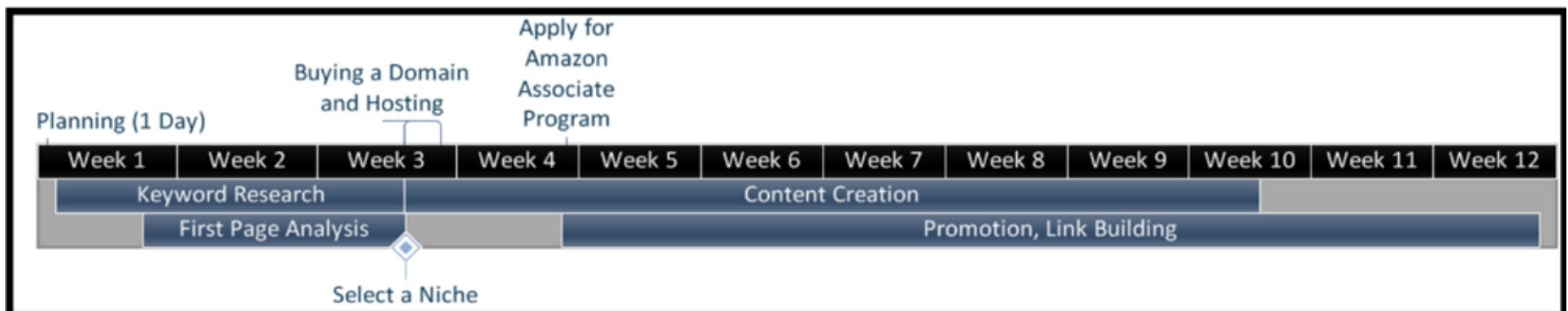
Promotion, Outreach, and Link Building - The way to improve your search engine rankings and end up on the front page, or even number one, for your key search terms.

Adding More Content and Optimizing for Conversion – Fine tune your content and affiliate links to attract more traffic and increase sales.

Targeting Related Products - Use your strong domain to expand beyond your initial keywords and attract additional visitors.

Backlink Profile Analysis & Advanced Link Building - Analyze the blend of your backlinks and build additional links to enhance your site's rankings and strength.

The timeline illustrates how the various phases relate to each other.



Some are straightforward; you need to complete keyword research before you can buy your domain (your domain name should contain some or all of your main keywords).

In project management, we would say that buying the domain name has a **dependency** on completing keyword research.

Here is another example: you need to have your WordPress site set up before you begin promoting and building links.

A dependency is the relationship between tasks that determines the order in which to perform activities.

Here is an example that is not as obvious: you need to have your website up with some decent content before you apply for the Amazon Associate program.

This is critical to ensure that the program approves your application quickly. Applying to Amazon Associates is a task that is dependent on having your website setup with a sufficient amount of content.

Planning

Planning sets the stage for the whole project and is the foundation for your efforts. If you fail to plan effectively, then your project might be doomed to failure before you begin.

During the planning phase, you will identify and define the project scope, goal, project costs, and the schedule for the project tasks.

This book takes the guess work out of the equation, but you do have some decisions to make.

(Note: this section references others phases of the project, like keyword research and content creation. The book explains these phases fully in separate chapters. If the Planning phase seems confusing at first don't worry; come back and re-read the phase once you finish the book).

What You Will Learn

- Definition of Planning
- Definition of Scope
- Goals for this Project
- Definition of White, Gray, and Black Hat

Project Scope

Scope defines what is included in your project and what is NOT included. Will you be targeting a smaller website designed for a smaller market with smaller profits? Do you have a war chest of funds to enable you to chase a bigger win with greater risk?

If you are new to niche websites, then you need to go for a smaller win initially to learn the process.

If you have been around the block and know the basics, then you can evaluate your situation and go for a big win if you can handle the risk.

If you get lucky, then you might select a good market that will pay off big.

Goal

The goal of this book is to teach you how to create a brand new affiliate website that generates revenue of \$500 or more per month using project management principles and utilizing the Amazon Associate program.

If you have more specific or detailed goals, you should outline them now during the planning phase.

Project Costs and Outsourcing

You might be wondering how much money you need to

start your website. Start-up expenses can vary widely, and your expenses will depend on personal factors. Technically, you could create a free website on blogger.com and start this project with \$0.

A more strategic, better approach would be to purchase hosting and a domain name (see the “Buying a Domain and Hosting” section for details). [BlueHost is highly recommended](#).

I have two accounts with them and only the highest compliments for their service and uptime.

For other tasks (content creation, link building, etc.), outsourcing is completely optional. Outsourcing can allow you to complete tasks more quickly, but it can also be costly if you use contractors extensively.

You do not have to make a firm decision about outsourcing now but it will be helpful in developing your project plan, creating the timeline, and creating the budget if you have a general idea of how much you plan to outsource.

I recommend that you do outsource a few tasks to familiarize yourself with the process.

Where can I hire contractors to outsource work?

There are countless options and here are a few: fiverr, oDesk, elance, craigslist, and other internet marketing sites.

If you stay in this business for a period of time or plan to scale your enterprise in the future you will find the ability to outsource effectively very valuable.

You will need to decide if you are open to outsourcing:

- Will you do the keyword research, partially or completely?
- Will you write the content of the website, partially or completely?
- Will you do all the link building, partially or completely?

You can re-evaluate each of the decisions along the way.

If you take care of all the tasks, then your initial expenses will be less and can be nearly \$0 (excluding hosting fees).

If you outsource everything, your expenses can climb into the hundreds or even thousands.

Remember also, the more you outsource, the more time you will need to spend managing your contractors.

If you have the budget available, I find a hybrid approach between completing all tasks yourself and outsourcing is ideal.

Outsourcing Advantage

You can greatly compress the timeline if you outsource content creation. Focused writers can produce quality content in days or even hours.

That will allow you to keep the costs down but allows experts to take care of specialized tasks.

How much is your time worth?

Only you can answer. You can pay someone to address the very time consuming tasks, like creating content, if you have more money than time.

Family and professional obligations will probably dictate how much time you can dedicate to the project.

A Note about Link Building: White, Black, and Gray Hats

Common internet marketing terms for the approach to building links are White, Black, or Gray Hat. Using these terms, the approach in this manual is Gray Hat.

The overall approach that you decide to use is a personal decision.

White Hat is totally pure and not realistic in most cases. In the strictest definition, you, as the webmaster, publish content without taking any action to obtain backlinks to your website.

Black Hat is performing acts that are illegal or violate

network security.

This is out of the question! We aren't doing anything illegal here or hacking networks.

Gray Hat is somewhere in the middle and **definitely not illegal** - for this scenario, it is strategically seeking links via outreach to other webmasters, Web 2.0 blogs, and similar tasks for links.

Google prefers a strict White Hat approach, but with a cautious hand Gray Hat activities are perfectly acceptable. There are even some options out there to purchase links which can be very powerful when used judiciously.

I am not a big proponent of link purchasing, but if you would like to get more information, I can help you find the right people.

[Email me](#) if you need some direction.

Is white hat really a viable approach?

Yes, as long as you have another form of promotion.

For example, if you have a podcast that you produce on a regular basis then you could generate an entire website fan base without any other outreach. For this project, it makes sense to use external resources for links.

Planning Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Start small if niche sites are new to you
- Determine your budget for expenses like outsourcing
- Begin thinking about your link building strategy

Don't

- Skip over the planning phase! It sets the foundation for your project

Planning Task List

- Decide if you will do all the keyword research, partially or completely
- Decide if you will write the content, partially or completely

Planning Worksheet

[Link to Google Document of this worksheet.](#)

Answer the following: Question

Do you want to target a highly competitive or a less competitive niche?

The focus of this book is creating an affiliate website selling Amazon products that earns \$500 per month within four to six months. Do you have additional goals for your site?

Do you have a budget for outsourcing? If yes, what is your budget?

Will you outsource any keyword research?

Will you outsource any content creation?

Will you outsource any link building?

Will you consider buying links?

Keyword and Product Research

This is a critical phase and your eventual success hinges on selecting a niche. Do not take this step lightly – choose a keyword wisely and you can profit in just 30 days, but choose a keyword poorly and you might never make any money.

What You Will Learn

- Techniques for Generating Ideas
- Role Playing Techniques for Generating Ideas
- Conducting Product Research in Amazon
- Value of Buyers Keywords
- Keyword Research with the Google Keyword

Brainstorming and Idea Generation

Feel free to use your own methods to brainstorm – mind mapping, whiteboard sessions, talking with your cat, etc...

Whatever works for you. Here are a couple methods to use when you hit a wall and cannot seem to generate unique ideas for niches.

NSP's Role Playing for Keywords (RPK)

Put yourself in someone else's shoes. This exercise will



help you get into a new frame of mind to see niches that you didn't know existed.

In the course of a normal day, you may see dozens or even hundreds of people - the lady at the grocery store with her child, the guy that just left the gym and is carrying a protein drink, or the biker getting off his motorcycle.

Let's take a deeper look here...

Example: A biker or motorcycle rider has a lot of accessories. He or she might want to purchase some items like a leather jacket, chaps, goggles, boots, GPS for motorcycles, motorcycle helmet, etc...

So, we have at least five keywords to research related to this one role play, and we will probably find a few more in the keyword planner just from looking at the general topics.

Consider all the ideas you can get just from thinking about your interactions with people in daily life. TV Shows and movies can also be a source for ideas if you don't get out of the house often.

Pat Flynn's "777" ([link](#)) - Create a list of 7 passions, 7 problems, and 7 fears. Then, select your top ten topics

from the list of 21. Use the top 10 to conduct your keyword research to see if you have any viable niches.

Spencer's 15 Ways to Brainstorm ([link](#)) - Spencer provides a list to add some structure around brainstorming for keyword ideas. They range from watching TV, going shopping, reviewing Google Trends, and reading forums. It's a great place to kick start your mind on new places to find ideas.

Constant observation and conversations - I go through my day seeing possibilities for niche sites everywhere now that my mind is open to the possibility.

Having a curious mind helps and it is also useful to keep a small notebook or use an app on your phone to jot down ideas as they occur to you.

Now, I have too many ideas, and that is good problem to have (as long as you can stay focused).

TIP: Be sure to use the [RPK worksheet](#) to help you brainstorm your ideas.

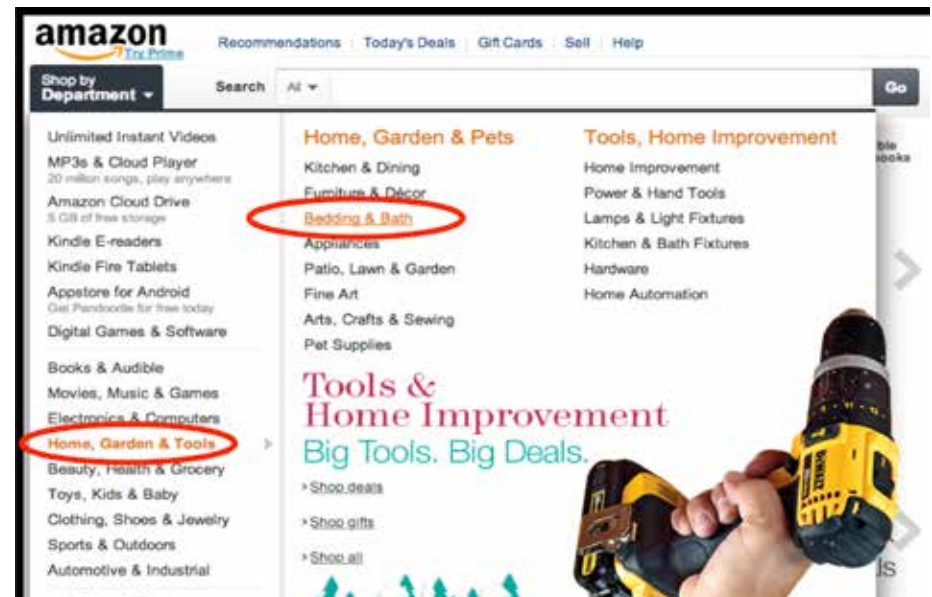
Product Research in Amazon

The goal is to get your visitors to buy something from Amazon, so searching for products on Amazon is always a good idea.

Here is a way to put structure around how you find and select products to research.

Browse categories

For example, go to the Home, Garden, and Tools Department >> Bedding & Bath.



Use the categories under bedding to search for potential keywords.

Select “All Bedding”:



The resulting potential search terms are: Electric Blankets, Flannel Sheets, Down Bedding, Comforters, and Blankets & Throws.

There are thousands of products out there to research as potential niches.



TIP: Look for items that have lots of reviews. Also, look for niches that have products with many positive reviews.

A good rule of thumb is to stay out of electronics and computers because tech savvy consumers are usually less likely to buy through an affiliate link.

Look at topics that you're interested in and look at related items that Amazon suggests.

Amazon knows what people buy and what products they are looking at so I fully trust the “Recommended” Products on any product's page.

Buyers Keywords - Our goal is to attract visitors interested in purchasing a product. The below keywords can help attract those visitors:

- “Best [keyword]”
- “[keyword] review”
- “[keyword] reviews”
- “top rated [keyword]”

Poor keywords - An example of a poor keyword would be a product name only, like “Down Bedding.”

These types of keywords are more difficult to rank for and the competition is often ecommerce sites. We can beat some ecommerce sites, but if the first page of Google is filled with results from Best Buy, Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Metro, etc., then it is usually best to look for alternate keywords where there is a better chance of success obtaining a high page ranking.

Here are other poor keywords:

“for sale [keyword]” and “what is [keyword]”.

Keyword Research

This is where we explore how many people search for a particular term. This step goes hand in hand with the brainstorming phase.

However, I recommend generating a decent list of

ideas before you start on the keyword research.

[Long Tail Pro \(LTP\)](#) is not just the preferred keyword research tool, but it is the de facto, platinum standard tool for keyword research. LTP significantly speeds up the research of the keywords. You can obtain a free 10 Day Trial (with limited functionality) to see how it works for you.



To get the full benefits, you should use LTP + Platinum. With the Platinum version, you will get the “Keyword Competitiveness” score, have the ability to save favorite keywords, and import lists of

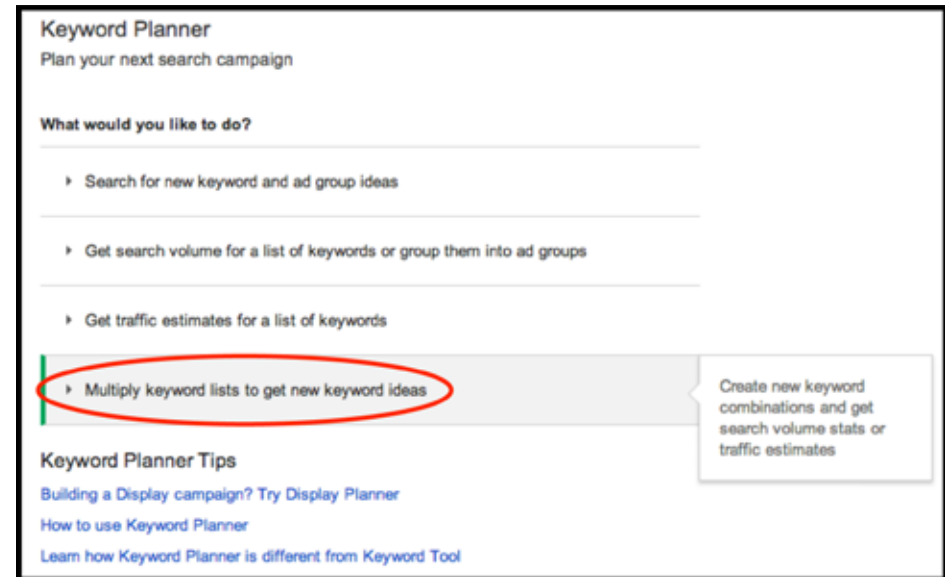
Google Keyword Planner - It's FREE so it's a good place to start if you are not able to budget in software expenses. Google moved from the **keyword tool** to the **keyword planner** during the summer of 2013.

The functions are generally the same but there are a few changes. The keyword planner now defaults to exact matches (not broad or phrase matches - If

you don't know what broad or phrase match is, then consider yourself lucky - you don't need to know).

Now, there is no device targeting - by default the tool considers all devices (desktops, phones, tables, etc.). You can still export for sorting and further analysis.

1. Navigate to adwords.google.com. Create an AdWords account if you do not already have one. It is free, just takes a minute, and you can use your existing Google account.
2. Head over to the keyword planner here: <https://adwords.google.com/ko/KeywordPlanner>
3. Open the field to enter your keywords by clicking on "Multiply keyword lists to get new keyword ideas." This is a fast way to search for several different keywords at once because Google puts together the combinations of two or more lists.



4. Enter the keywords, separating them by commas or putting them on separate lines.
5. Click on the “Get search volume” button after you have entered your keywords. Let’s use the ideas from the motorcycle role play for this example.

Multiple keyword lists to get new keyword ideas

List 1: best motorcycle, top rated motorcycle

List 2: leather jacket, chaps, goggles, boots, GPS, helmet

Targeting: United States, Google, Negative keywords

Buttons: Get estimates, **Get search volume**

Create new keyword combinations and get search volume stats or traffic estimates

6. The tool groups the results by “Ad group ideas” and you can also download the file as a CSV for further analysis.
7. Click on the “Motorcycle” Ad group to see the search volume.

Ad group (by relevance)	Keywords	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Ad impr. share	Add to plan
Top Rated (8)	top rated motorcycle...	50	High	\$0.35	0%	
Motorcycle (8)	best motorcycle h...	4,320	High	\$1.69	0%	

1 - 2 of 2 ad groups

8. Not bad overall for the aggregate, and “Best Motorcycle Helmet” looks like it could be promising (let’s remember that one for later).

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Ad impr. share	Add to plan
best motorcycle helmet	2,900	High	\$1.81	0%	
best motorcycle boots	590	High	\$1.39	0%	
best motorcycle GPS	590	High	\$1.74	0%	
best motorcycle goggles	140	High	\$0.71	0%	
best motorcycle leather jacket	70	High	\$1.08	0%	
best motorcycle chaps	30	High	\$0.98	0%	

1 - 6 of 6 keywords

Note: The “competition” column refers to the competition for Google ads. Because we are building and affiliate site, this is not relevant for our purposes, so do not be concerned if says “High.”

Primary and Secondary Keywords

Typically, you will have just one primary keyword phrase. We will use the primary keyword to track our progress with visitors, and that allows us to roughly predict how many would-be buyers we will have visiting the site.

Keyword research is an inexact science, but let's state some **assumptions** based on the prevailing knowledge:

If someone is researching a product, they will most likely be clicking on more than one of the websites on the Search Engine Results Page (SERP).

This is supported by moz in [this article](#). In fact, they found that users click on about 2 links on the SERP.

- The 1st result gets about 50% click through rate (CTR).
- The 2nd result gets a bit over 30% CTR.
- The 3rd result gets just under 30% CTR.
- The 4th result gets a bit over 20% CTR.
- 5th and 6th are around 15% CTR.
- 7th to 10th gets around 10% CTR.

If we can place our website in the 2nd or 3rd result we will conservatively acquire about 30% of the clicks. In the “motorcycle helmet” example, that is $2900 \times 30\% = 870$ visitors per month, or about 29 visitors per day.

In addition, we can see that moving from the 10th result up to the 3rd result is a huge difference in traffic (29 visitors per day vs. 10 visitors per day – almost a 3X increase!).

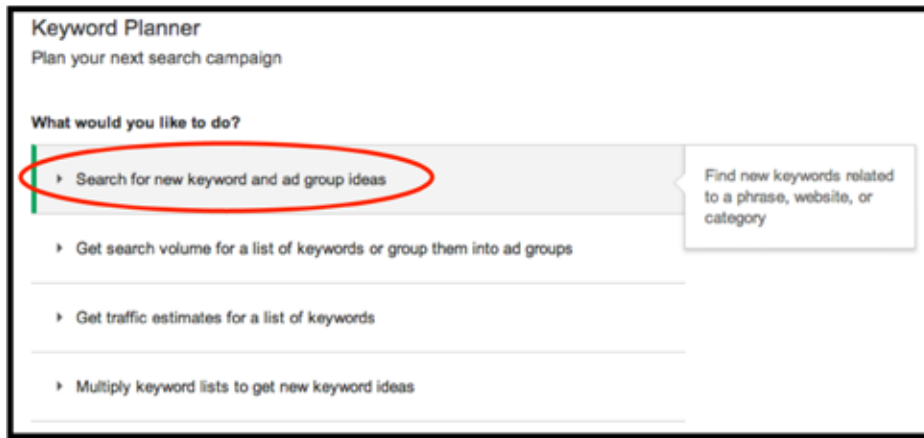
It is ideal to have 10 or more related keyword phrases called secondary keywords. You will be able to write articles or a series of reviews on these related products.

These will be crucial to help your site rank quickly since **secondary keywords** are typically not as competitive.

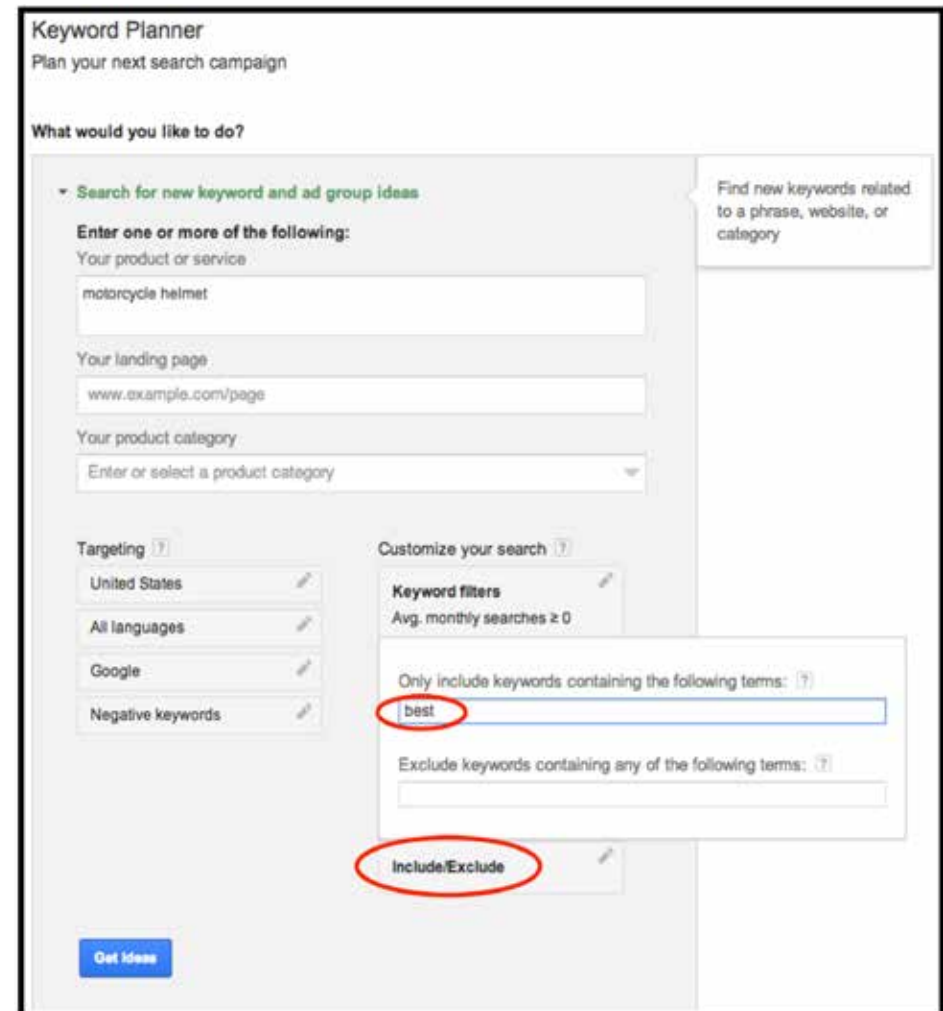
If your secondary keywords are strong enough they could have been their own niches. If so, that's a powerful, highly profitable niche!

Let's look at “best motorcycle helmet” to see what secondary keywords we can find.

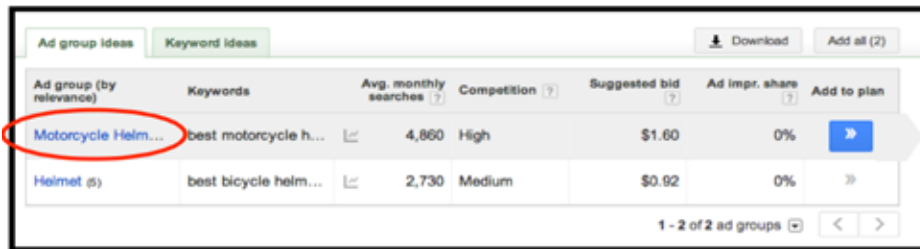
1. Go back to the keyword planner. This time let's search a different way.
2. Click on “Search for new keyword and ad group ideas.”



3. Type in “motorcycle helmet” in the first field.
4. Click on “Include/Exclude” - this is a technique I use to quickly find buyers keywords - this option will filter our results for us.
5. When the field expands, type in “best” in the field labeled: “Only include keywords containing the following terms:”



6. The results page should look familiar.
7. Click on the “Ad group” labeled “Motorcycle Helm...” to review the results.



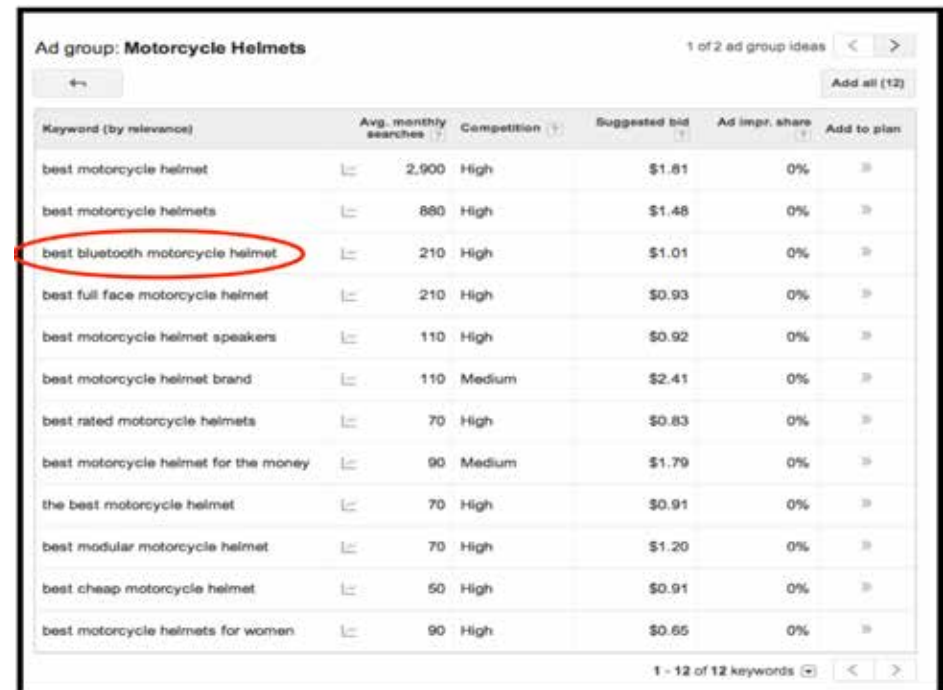
This screenshot shows the 'Ad group ideas' section of the Google Ads Keyword Planner. The 'Motorcycle Helmets' ad group is highlighted with a red circle. It shows 4,860 average monthly searches, high competition, and a suggested bid of \$1.60.

Ad group (by relevance)	Keywords	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Ad impr. share	Add to plan
Motorcycle Helm...	best motorcycle h...	4,860	High	\$1.60	0%	➔
Helmet (5)	best bicycle helm...	2,730	Medium	\$0.92	0%	➔

Now we have a whole bunch of secondary keywords that look promising. There are product names that I didn't know existed!

Like a "bluetooth motorcycle helmet" - Can you link up to your phone and jam out to Pandora? That's pretty cool.

Or maybe it allows the user to talk on the phone? Who knows...I just know people are looking to buy these products.



This screenshot shows the 'Keyword ideas' section for the 'Motorcycle Helmets' ad group. The keyword 'best bluetooth motorcycle helmet' is highlighted with a red circle. The table lists 12 keywords with their respective search volumes, competition levels, and suggested bids.

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Ad impr. share	Add to plan
best motorcycle helmet	2,900	High	\$1.81	0%	➔
best motorcycle helmets	880	High	\$1.48	0%	➔
best bluetooth motorcycle helmet	210	High	\$1.01	0%	➔
best full face motorcycle helmet	210	High	\$0.93	0%	➔
best motorcycle helmet speakers	110	High	\$0.92	0%	➔
best motorcycle helmet brand	110	Medium	\$2.41	0%	➔
best rated motorcycle helmets	70	High	\$0.83	0%	➔
best motorcycle helmet for the money	90	Medium	\$1.79	0%	➔
the best motorcycle helmet	70	High	\$0.91	0%	➔
best modular motorcycle helmet	70	High	\$1.20	0%	➔
best cheap motorcycle helmet	50	High	\$0.91	0%	➔
best motorcycle helmets for women	90	High	\$0.65	0%	➔

The aggregate total for the primary and secondary keywords is 4860. Great! That means we can conservatively assume that 1458 visitors per month will visit the site if we rank 2nd or 3rd ($4860 \times 30\% = 1458$). That is about 49 per day.

Based on my observations, this is a conservative estimate at a 30% CTR since there will be other long tail searches not included in our research.

Keyword and Product Research Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Use multiple brainstorming strategies
- Use buyers keywords
- Generate a list of potential primary keywords before starting keyword research

Don't

- Immediately select the first keyword that looks promising. Sleep on it!
- Choose an electronics keyword (unless you are really, really confident)
- Forget to analyze secondary keywords

Keyword and Product Research Task List

- Brainstorm and idea generation
- Review Amazon product categories to get ideas
- Use Long Tail Pro or Google Keyword Planner to analyze search volume for potential primary keywords
- Use Long Tail Pro or Google Keyword Planner to analyze related keywords and secondary keywords

Keyword and Product Research Worksheet

[Link to Google Document of this worksheet.](#)

Complete the following:	
Brainstorm Keywords using one of the following techniques:	Write Down Brainstorming Ideas Here:
- NSP's Role Playing for Keywords	
- Pat Flynn's "777"	
- Spencer's 15 ways to Brainstorm	
- Product Research in Amazon	
- General Observations	
Select 5 keywords for first page competition analysis (Don't proceed until have at least 5):	
<i>Example: Best Motorcycle Helmet</i>	
Exact Searches (>1500 per month)	2900
Use a Buyers Keyword:	Best
Potential Secondary Keywords:	Bluetooth, full face, speakers, brand, rated
1:	
Exact Searches (>1500 per month)	
Use a Buyers Keyword:	
Potential Secondary Keywords:	
2:	
Exact Searches (>1500 per month)	
Use a Buyers Keyword:	
Potential Secondary Keywords:	
3:	
Exact Searches (>1500 per month)	
Use a Buyers Keyword:	
Potential Secondary Keywords:	
4:	
Exact Searches (>1500 per month)	
Use a Buyers Keyword:	
Potential Secondary Keywords:	
5:	
Exact Searches (>1500 per month)	
Use a Buyers Keyword:	
Potential Secondary Keywords:	

First Page Competition Analysis

There is an art to analyzing the first page competition. The Google algorithm is a mystery, and it is a moving target since the algorithm is updated very often. Some people say it is updated daily. There are a few things that we can count on to have an impact on the rankings.

What You Will Learn

- Importance of SEO Factors
 - Page Title
 - Backlinks
- Definition of Page Authority
- Definition of Domain Authority
- Meta Description
- Tools: Mozbar, Majestic SEO, ahrefs

Page Title

This is the text that appears first in the SERPs and at the top of the browser window. It obviously tells the user what the webpage is about and it holds quite a bit of weight in the rankings.

Be sure you use appropriate titles that target your keywords. It is better to be natural in the title than using unusual wording just to use the keyword phrase. “Find the Best Motorcycle Helmet” would be a good choice.

It is good to see the first page of results with some websites that do not have the keyword(s) in the title or not in the right order.

This indicates that the webmaster is not targeting that keyword as effectively as he or she could.

Number of Backlinks

We can consider backlinks like a vote of popularity. A backlink means that another website has deemed your website worthy of a link.

Some backlinks are more valuable than others.

Here is an analogy: If Brad Pitt (or fill in your favorite celebrity) says that you're a great person and that he thinks you are down to earth that will mean a lot since Brad Pitt is a celebrity.

If I make the same statement it won't have the same impact. For this application, a link from whitehouse.gov is a more powerful link than one from a random tumblr.com blog.

It is good to see at least three results on the first

SERP with less than 40 links. You can get far more than thirty links with some modest techniques in link building (the Tools section in this chapter explains how to see a site's backlink profile).

Page Authority

If you can summarize the authority of a web page into one single number, this is it. Here is the definition from moz.com:

Page Authority is Moz's calculated metric for how well a given webpage is likely to rank in Google.com's search results. It is based off data from the Mozscape web index and includes link counts, MozRank, MozTrust, and dozens of other factors. It uses a machine learning model to predictively find an algorithm that best correlates with rankings across the thousands of search results that we predict against.

It is good to see three or more websites listed with a PA less than 30. If the PA is over 35, it becomes more challenging to beat those websites.

If the PA is over 40, then you are looking at a longer timeframe to beat those sites in the search engine rankings.

Other Sites on the First Page

This is one of the best indicators on how Google is viewing the niche.

What other sites do you see listed on the first page? You can usually recognize a niche site because the domain name contains the keywords.

Do you see other niche sites? That's a good sign.

It means that other people have done research and determined that the niche can be profitable.

If you see one niche website on the first page, go ahead and look at the next three or four pages to check for other niche sites.

You may find that several people found that the niche is a strong market.

Do you see forum posts from the niche? Those can be tough to beat sometimes but this is also a good sign.

Do you see Q&A sites, like Yahoo Answers or ask.com? That is a really good sign! Those answers are usually pretty weak overall even though they are well optimized for SEO.

TIP: It might seem like a bad idea to try to compete in a market that has many, many other niche sites already.

Do your due diligence and you might find a very strong market. Check on the strength of the other niche sites. You can beat them if you do your research and know how strong the other sites are.

Review the key factors that I've outlined. You might find that people started sites and never followed through to complete their project.

If you complete your project you win!

Domain Authority

This number is similar to the page authority but of course it applies to the domain. It can give you a good idea about how powerful a website is overall. However, if the website is based on a subdomain and the domain is something like blogger.com, then the DA might not be very relevant.

Definition from moz.com:

Domain Authority measures the strength of entire domains or subdomains. The same is true for metrics such as MozRank and MozTrust.

Domain Age is a factor that was more important but its

power seems to be waning. However, if I had a choice to start a niche site with a brand new domain or to use a domain (in the niche) that was a couple years old, I would pick the aged domain every time.

Meta Description won't make your rankings sky rocket, but if you fail to have a relevant meta description it could hurt you.

You have 160 characters to explain what your web page is about. It is displayed underneath the title of the page in the SERPs.

The Meta Description is NOT a Google ranking factor, but the right meta description can help a web page get a higher CTR on the SERPs.

Tools

MozBar (Toolbar)

Instantly review the PA and DA of a site. The plugin installs in just a couple minutes. It is only available on Firefox and Chrome. This is the primary tool I use to review the competition on the first page. At a glance you can see three pieces of critical information. You do not need to use Majestic or ahrefs unless you see a site that requires further analysis.

Page Authority - You want the majority of sites on the front page to have a PA under 30.

If the PA is 1 that means the page does not have a value yet, but you can divide the DA by 2 to get a reasonable idea of the relative authority of the page.

Domain Authority - We are not as concerned but we do take note. It can help you determine the general authority for the SERP results that do not have a valid PA.

TIP: A good meta description for our example, “best motorcycle helmet” would be:

Find the Best Motorcycle Helmet. A helmet can save your life if you have an accident on your motorcycle.

Links – The MozBar also displays the number of links. You will notice that the total is probably different than the numbers that you will see over at Majestic SEO or ahrefs. The SEO firms catalog the internet in different ways and as a result have different totals for backlinks.

To restate the point, you do not need to use Majestic SEO or ahrefs unless you find that you need to take a deep dive into the backlink profile of the site. For example, you may want to check out the backlink profile for a niche website or the forum post. In those cases, you might want to check if the site has some weak links in the form of comments or if they have powerful links from Wikipedia.

Majestic SEO

Majestic SEO allows you to see a great number of the backlinks that are pointing to a website. To take a deeper dive to see if the links are powerful, spammy, or easily attainable, you can review the backlink profile with a free account from Majestic.

ahrefs

ahrefs provides another way to check your backlinks with their Site Explorer & Backlink Checker. You can sign up for a free account to gain more functionality just like Majestic SEO. ahrefs does have a limit on the number of queries you can run in a month but it should be sufficient in most cases.

Selecting a Niche

You found a promising keyword and many other secondary keywords after two weeks of brainstorming, researching, and iterating. Sleep on it. Selecting your niche is the culmination of a lot of effort so taking a little extra time is worthwhile. This is a good point in time to bounce the idea off another person and maybe have them do a little independent research to ensure they come to the same conclusion.

If you are a member of the Private Google group, this would be a good time to confer with peers.

If you want to learn how to gain access to the Private Google group, don't hesitate to contact me contact me via email.

First Page Competition Analysis Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Install the MozBar to aid in your analysis
- Sign up for free accounts with Majestic SEO and ahrefs
- Look at page titles, backlinks, and page authority on the first SERP
- Look for other niche sites, forum posts, or other Q&A sites

Don't

- Discount a keyword because there are other niche sites on the first SERP – this could be a good sign
- Rush through the analysis of the first SERP – this is your competition if you choose this niche

First Page Competition Analysis Task List

- Use Long Tail Pro to analyze keyword competitiveness
- Perform Google search on keywords
 - Check for keywords in page titles and meta descriptions
 - Check for other niche sites
 - Check for forum posts
 - Check for Q & A sites
- Set up free accounts with Majestic SEO, ahrefs, and MOZ
- Install the MOZ toolbar
- Review the Page Authority and Domain Authority values from the MOZ toolbar
- Check the first 5-10 pages of search results for

First Page Competition Analysis Worksheet

[Link to Google Document of this worksheet.](#)

Step 1: Install MozBar and sign up for free accounts with ahrefs and Majestic SEO							
Step 2: Complete the below chart for each potential keyword's first SERP							
POTENTIAL KEYWORD:							
Rank	Website	Keywords in Title? (Yes or No)	Number of backlinks	Page Authority	Niche website (Yes or No)	Forum Post (Yes or No)	Q&A website (Yes or No)
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
	Goals:	Some without keyword in title	>= 3 with 40 or less	>= 3 with PA 30 or less	A few Niche sites	A few forum posts	A few Q&A sites

Buying a Domain and Hosting

Congratulations! You now know your niche and are ready to find the right url. This phase should only take about one day to complete, which is a nice change from the timely process of keyword research.

What You Will Learn

- Guidelines to Pick a Domain
- Selecting a Host and Importance of 1-Click WordPress Install
- WordPress Plugins, Themes, Headers
- Required Pages: About Me, Privacy Page, Disclaimer, Contact

Domain Selection

If possible, you want to select a domain name that contains your primary keywords. Having the keyword in the domain previously provided a boost in rankings, but that is **no longer the case**.

However, a domain name with the keywords lets the user know that your website is dedicated to that keyword (this is good, since we are targeting buyers).

If you are unable to find an available domain that contains the primary keywords, don't worry. This is less

important now, in 2014. It is fine to get a less targeted domain name that is brandable.

A brandable domain is usually preferable in 2015 and beyond.

A strong domain name means the user is more likely to click on your page in the SERPs, boosting your CTR. Finding an available domain name can be challenging, so here are some tools and strategies to help.

- www.bustaname.com - This website will help you come up with combinations for domain names. Watch the video tutorial on their page if you have any questions about how to use the tool.
- If the exact match domain is not available then try using some words to pad the keyword phrase.
- Try to use prefixes like “the,” “e,” “i,” or “my.”
- Try to use suffixes like “guide,” “institute,” “handbook,” “manual,” “bible,” “institute,” or “101.”
- Try to get .com, .net, or .org. It probably doesn't affect the rankings at all but they are more common and will attract more visitors. If you have the option get the .com version.
- If you are targeting a localized audience, then you can seek out the relevant type of domain.

For example, if you are in the UK, then you might consider .co.uk or if you are in Germany, you might choose a .de domain.

WordPress and Host Selection

- Find a host with 1 click WordPress Installation.
- I recommend [BlueHost](#). The service is the best in the business and the uptime is top notch. It's so good I have two accounts.

Plugins

- [Websimon](#) – Websimon enables you to create and manage tables on your WordPress site. No HTML knowledge is needed – a comfortable interface allows you to easily edit table data.
- [WordPress SEO \(Yoast\) - WordPress SEO](#) is the most complete WordPress SEO plugin that exists today for WordPress.org users. It incorporates everything from a snippet preview and page analysis functionality that helps you optimize your content, image titles, meta descriptions and more to XML sitemaps, and loads of optimization options in between.
- [WordPress Jetpack](#) - Jetpack is a WordPress plugin that supercharges your self-hosted site with the cloud power of WordPress.com. I like the contact form and the site stats features.

- [Yet Another Related Posts Plugin](#) - Gives you a list of posts and/or pages related to the current entry, introducing the reader to other relevant content on your site.
- [W3 Total Cache](#) - Designed to improve user experience and page speed.
- [WP Smush.it](#) - Reduce image file sizes and improve performance using the Smush.it API within WordPress.

Themes

Don't spend too much time selecting a theme initially. I suggest picking one of the WordPress standard, default themes – 2014, 2013, or 2012.

Later, once you're making some money on the site, you can select a premium theme to purchase or hire a designer to take care of it for you.

The default themes offer a clean look with reasonable options.

You don't want too many options in the theme in the beginning because you can become distracted and waste hours trying to get your site "just right."

At this point in your project, your time is better spent elsewhere!

Header

Since you are using a default theme, you will want to take some time on the header to make the site look clean and professional.

Either work on this yourself with a high quality image that you resize, crop, and upload to fit your theme, or you can outsource it.

This would be a very good opportunity to use fiverr. Check out the “Graphics & Design, Banners & Headers” section and don’t be afraid to ask questions of the suppliers. If you have the budget, hire 2-3 people (it’s only \$5 a gig) and then you can choose your favorite.

Permalinks (from wordpress.org)

Permalinks are the permanent URLs to your individual website posts. The URL to each post should be permanent, and never change — hence permalink.

The default setting in wordpress is not very helpful to the reader or to search engines.

It looks something like this: 1

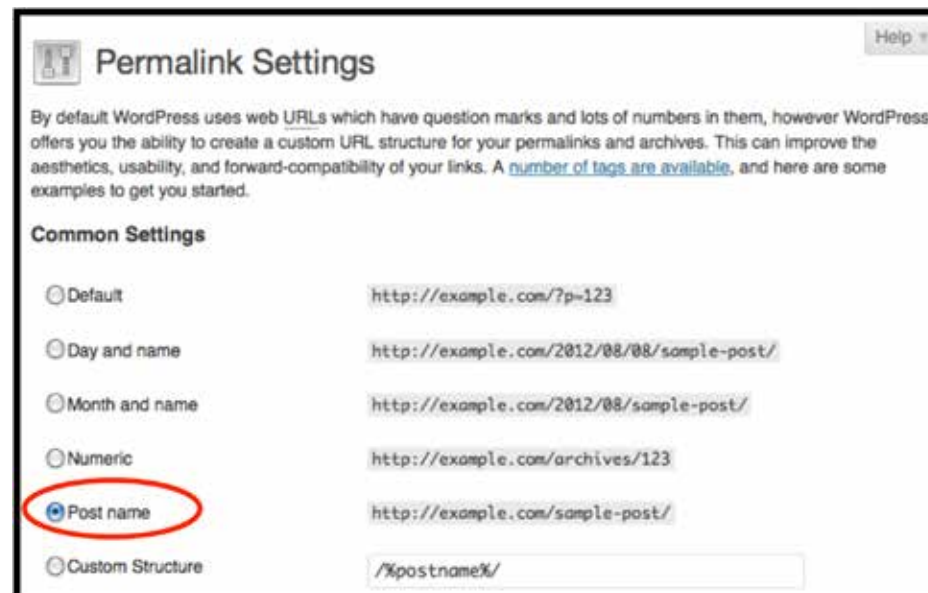
`http://your-domain.com/?p=726`

Choosing your permalink structure

Go to the wordpress dashboard on your website. Go to Settings, then Permalinks panel, you can choose one

of the preset formats or enter your own in the “Custom structure” field using the structure tags.

The best option is to select the “Post Name” option.



Create an About Me page

The “About Me” page personalizes your site and lets your visitors know that you are a real person, just like them.

A picture is great to include and adds trust. Include your name, profession and/or a fun personal fact. Emphasize your expertise as it relates to the niche and mention the number of years of experience, specific experiences, or related facts.

You can also add relevant personal traits, mentions in publications, work experience, or education that would add credibility. If you want to remain anonymous, use a pseudonym and feel free to create a persona that is relevant to the niche.

Create a Privacy Page

You should always create a privacy page to cover yourself. These are generic and simple to create.

I use serprank's tool: <http://www.serprank.com/privacy-policy-generator/>

Create a Disclaimer Page

Amazon requires that you note your affiliation with them. I have read the documentation on the Amazon Associate site and here is the minimum that you need to disclose:

“[Your website] is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to amazon.com.”

You can add a little personal commentary if you would like, but do not alter the statement above. Some people like to mention they get a percentage and they really appreciate the support, but that is up to you and not required.

Create a Contact Page

I suggest using the contact form that jetpack includes.

Congratulations! Now that you've set up your domain you are ready to move on to content creation.

Buying a Domain and Hosting Summary

****** Keep in mind that it is okay to publish your website if it isn't perfect. It won't be perfect. It is critical to publish your content and move forward. It is okay if your header is not perfect. It won't be perfect either.

It is important to come to the realization that you can go back and make improvements as you progress. When the time is right, you can hire a designer to make improvements on the header. ******

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Select a domain name that contains your primary keywords
- Find a host with 1-click Wordpress installation
- Customize your header to look clean and professional

Don't

- Spend too much time or money selecting a theme
- Forget to create a disclaimer page with the required Amazon Affiliates information

Buying a Domain and Hosting Task List

- Select and purchase a domain using the selected keywords
- Set up hosting at Bluehost (or other hosting company)
- Install WordPress (use one click install)
- Install plugins
- Select & Install a theme
- Create a custom header
- Set up Google webmaster tools
- Set up Google Analytics
- Set up Google Authorship (can use a pseudonym)
- Create About Page

Content Creation

The content on your site is important for two reasons:

1. This is how you bring value to the user and
2. This is what Google uses to determine what your website is about. It is your opportunity to add value to the internet.

You should only publish original content (content created by you or someone that you hire). This is a phase that you can compress, meaning shorten the time required to complete it, by outsourcing. You can have all the content written for you while you are working on installing WordPress plugins and setting up the website.

What You Will Learn

- Front Page Guidelines
- Advantages of Text Broker
- Where to find Images for Free
- How to organize your content with silos

Front Page

The goal for the front page is **at least 2000** words in the first article. If you hire a contractor for the front

page, you should still expect to spend time making edits. That is not a bad thing since you will be able to tailor the article specifically in your voice and add your own commentary.

In the theme settings, select to have this page as the homepage of the site, NOT most recent posts.

TIP: In WordPress, you should have your front page content as a Page, not a post. Go to the Dashboard in your WordPress Admin panel. Go to Appearance → Customize → Static Front Page. Click the radio button for “A static page” and select your page in the “Front page” drop down menu.

I like to approach the front page article with a short intro about the site followed by a question and answer format. Use the keyword in the Title and the Meta Description of the page.

Many products lend themselves to a table format for easy comparison of features, specifications, etc. I highly recommend Websimon over Tablepress for clean looking tables.

Write normally without considering keyword density or placement.

If you write normally, you will naturally use the keyword and long tail keywords. If you hire a writer, give them a topic with a general outline of what you want included.

However, refrain from putting any specific criteria for keyword usage as it is better to add that in afterwards when you are editing.

Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- 1% or less of the targeted keyword or keyword phrase.
- Use the targeted keyword or keyword phrase within the first paragraph – use the keyword phrase.
- Use the targeted keyword or keyword phrase within the last paragraph.
- Use the targeted keyword or keyword phrase at least one time in an H1 or H2 heading. Use a Q&A format and format the questions as H2, and you will undoubtedly use the keyword throughout the front page.

Outsourcing

Refer back to the planning phase where we discussed hiring writers. If you choose to hire a writer you have a couple options.

I recommend Textbroker. You can create multiple projects at the same time, all with different topics. The jobs are separate and go to a pool of eager writers. The writing quality can vary from barely legible to professional writing.

The worst quality is almost unusable but is super cheap and the best is very, very expensive.

TIP: Text Broker is very powerful because multiple writers are working at the same time. If you segment the article topics into independent packages you can get a very long article written in one day.

I recommend level 3 at Text Broker if you are willing to spend a little time word-smithing and editing. Level 4 is more expensive but the quality is great and it is likely that you will not need to edit.

TIP: Write part of the post yourself then hire someone to write about certain aspects. You might be able to save yourself a couple hours of research and writing for \$12.

For example, if you were writing about blenders, you could have a 500 word article written about each of the following: Blender Wattage, Blender Controls, Blender Speeds, Blender Pulse Setting, and Attached Blades for Blenders. In one day you could have a 2500 word article ready for you to edit – that is a great turnaround time!

Should you credit the writers? No. You should state in the job description that the content will be published on a website under a pseudonym.

It is best to adopt a pseudonym, or fake name, to publish your content. You should use a pseudonym so that your sites can be kept private.

That means that if you have multiple sites then your competitors will not be able to figure out all of your money making sites as easily.

Writing Reviews

Write reviews for top products on Amazon for your niche. If you do not have firsthand knowledge of the product, refer to the manufacturer's website and the posted Amazon reviews for content; your goal is for visitors to buy products on Amazon, so be as positive as possible.

It's helpful to select 3 - 5 items from various price ranges. I like under \$50, under \$100, and over \$100 but it depends on your specific product.

It might be tempting to select the most expensive items but a mix is best. If you sell more items (even inexpensive items), then you can move up to the more rewarding tiers of the affiliate program.

Number of Products Shipped/Downloaded in a Given Month**	Volume-Based Advertising Fee Rates for General Products
1-6	4.00%
7-30	6.00%
31-110	6.50%
111-320	7.00%
321-630	7.50%
631-1570	8.00%
1571-3130	8.25%
3131+	8.50%

A good goal for your first round of content creation is at least 5 articles with 400 – 1000 words each. At this point your website is starting to fill out and look lived in.

Images

Images on your website will make it look more professional and interesting. You should use some images that are available from Amazon's product pages, but other images can add diversity and help you make your point.

Don't use images online without having permission.

- Flickr has a HUGE number of images to choose from with various sizes available. Use <http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/> and be sure to attribute the image accordingly. I put a "Photo Credit" line at the end of the page or post that lists the flickr username with an appropriate link back to the user's page.
- Use <http://morguefile.com/>. These images do not need attribution but there are fewer choices.

Using Silos to Organize Content

Organizing a website is important for two main reasons:

A Positive User Experience: If you organize your site well, the users have an easier time navigating through your website.

The SEO Benefits: A well organized website, one with a silo architecture, gives search engines a great deal of support about the topics that the website covers. In other words, Google gets a clear idea about the niche your website targets.

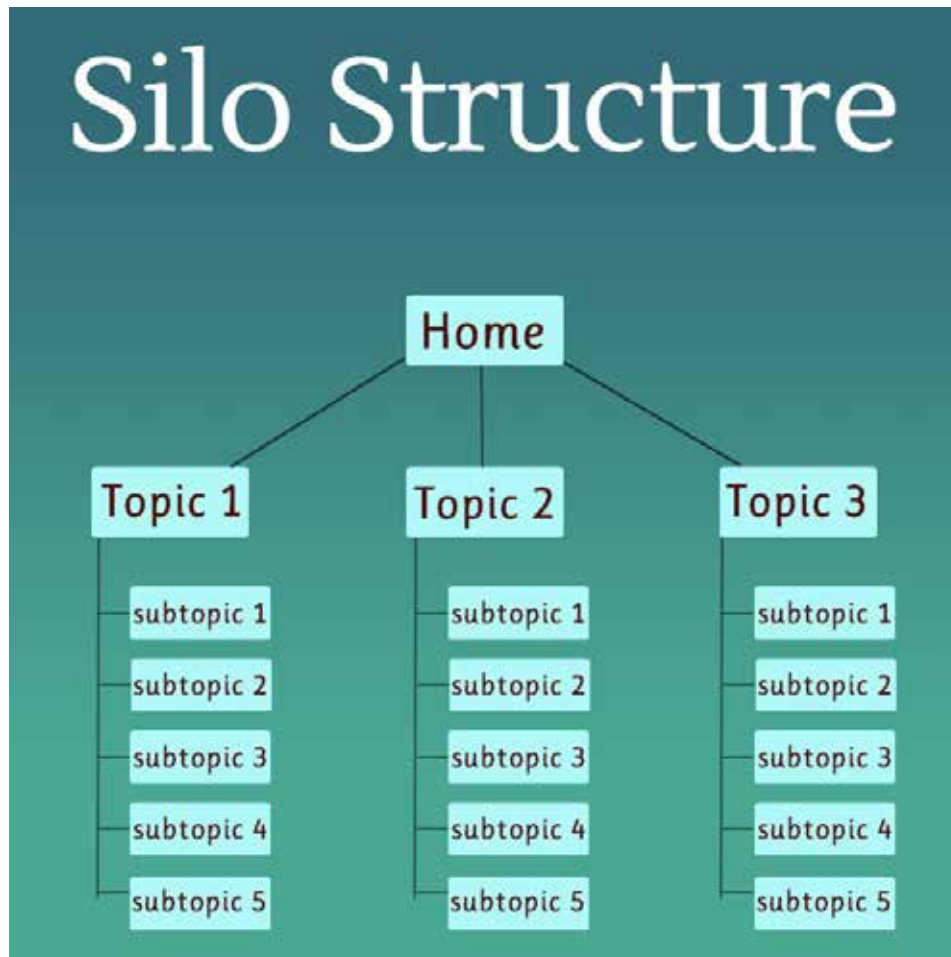
Fortunately, the two drivers go well together and rarely conflict.

The bottom line is that if you organize a site in a logical way the users and search engines like it.

Definition: What is a Silo?

A silo is a way to design and organize a website that groups topics and related information together. You can think of siloing as a way to organize the content of a website in a systematic way.

It takes careful planning – this isn't just building a website quickly without any forethought. This is website architecture.



And the text version:

- `example.com/topic-1`
- `example.com/topic-1/subtopic-1`
- `example.com/topic-1/subtopic-2`
- `example.com/topic-1/subtopic-3`
- `example.com/topic-1/subtopic-4`
- `example.com/topic-1/subtopic-5`
- `example.com/topic-2`
- `example.com/topic-2/subtopic-1 . . .`
- `example.com/topic-2/subtopic-5`
- `example.com/topic-3`
- `example.com/topic-3/subtopic-1 . . .`
- `example.com/topic-3/subtopic-5`

...and, so on...

Above is a quick illustration of a silo structure.

Is it worth the extra effort? Let's take a deeper look at the benefits.

Benefits: Why use a Silo?

The top reason to use a silo is the SEO benefits. The search engines look favorably on websites that have tightly focused subject matter – it makes it easy to interpret the content of the website.

The structure helps pass the link juice exactly where it's needed to rank your main keywords. The theory is that the link juice is extremely relevant since the interlinking topics are closely related.

A secondary reason is that silo-ing provides a better user experience. Why?

Well, the content is organized so that it's easy to navigate around to find related and relevant information.

Alternatively, if you don't plan out the site architecture, you often end up with all your content in posts.

That leads to a hard-to-navigate website, just like a book without a table of contents. Overall, it's easier for the user to find more of your content with a silo structure.

How to Implement a Silo

Let's consider a situation where you're starting a brand new site. You have a blank canvas and can structure the website however you choose. This initial structure is the entire foundation of your website.

It's even more important to get the structure correct if the website is an authority site or if you are planning a large number of posts or pages.

Plan ahead as much as you can when you start out your site. It helps to think about things ahead of time and to be organized from the get-go.

WordPress Doesn't Natively Support Silos

WordPress has tags and categories but they aren't specifically helpful for silos. It would be super cool if there was a silo classification...but there isn't.

There are some common concepts between categories and silos but a few things are missing. You could probably get something usable with a little tinkering with the permalink structure along with the categories, but who has time to mess with that?

Inherently, there is not a way to build a silo site out of the box with WordPress.

Luckily, we can set up a silo effectively without any special tools as long as we have a solid plan upfront.

The upside is that you can keep it straightforward and not use any plugins.

The downside is that there is more administrative work when you add more content to the site.

That's not really a problem unless you plan on having a very large site – then it may become tedious.

Consider these 3 steps:

First, do your keyword research in a very thorough manner so you have a lot of long tail keywords.

Next, use pages, not posts, and utilize a parent-child hierarchy.

Last, link out to other content on your site.

The Structure – Pages

You can probably tell what we are trying to achieve based on the illustration. It isn't overly complicated if we use pages in WordPress instead of posts.

So... topic-1, topic-2, and topic-3 are pages.

Let's consider them as the main silo pages – all the content of the site falls under these main silo topic pages.

All of the subtopics (subtopic-X) are also pages. The subtopics have a "parent" page (main silo topic pages) set in the Page Attribute section in WordPress. The

parent page aligns each of the subtopics (children) to its parent topic.

You can also extend this further by having subtopics for the subtopics. WordPress does not have a limit for the number of nested pages. That might look like this:

- `example.com/topic-2/subtopic-5/another-subtopic-1`
- `example.com/topic-2/subtopic-5/another-subtopic-2`
- `example.com/topic-2/subtopic-5/another-subtopic-3`

Simply setting up the page hierarchy with parent and child pages (and grandchildren), provides the exact structure we need for a silo. Generally, you want to keep the structure at three layers or less unless you have a very large site.

While WordPress does not support silo structures natively, the parent-child hierarchy for pages works out great.

The Keywords

The keywords determine how you organize your site. You need a very good understanding of the keywords that the site targets. It doesn't have to be all inclusive, but you should have a list of main target keywords at a minimum.

You should have secondary keywords, too. And, deep

dive into the long tail of your niche – even look for the keywords that have a very low volume of exact monthly searches. During your research, check out the keywords that the competing websites are targeting as well.

There is not a minimum number of keywords but if you are having trouble identify keywords then try to figure out why. Either you need to look harder and find more long tail keywords or the niche does not lend itself to that many keywords.

How many keywords do you need? If you cannot find at least 5 subtopics for most of the parent pages, then a silo structure may not be worth the effort to fully implement. You can still follow most of the guidelines, maybe not as strictly, in case the site expands.

That said, the common wisdom is to keep your structure no more than 2 – 3 levels deep so that the child pages get enough links.

Interlinking the Website

The structure is only part of the equation.

The interlinking of the pages is what makes the whole structure work. There are a few theories and methods on the best way to interlink the pages to pass the maximum amount of link juice. Some of those methods are very strict about where links appear on the page

and what pages can link to other pages.

Linking naturally when related topics arise in the content is satisfactory for the user experience. I slightly favor this approach since it is never a bad thing to have a positive user experience.

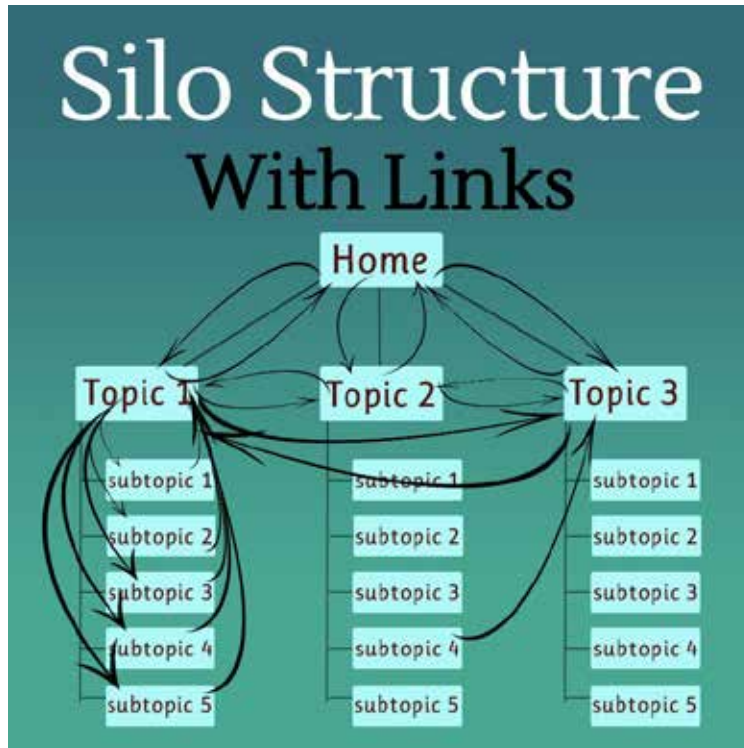
If you structure the pages like we see in the example above and link to your related articles every chance you get, then your site should have a great silo structure with adequate interlinking.

Guidelines to interlinking

There are some guidelines to keep in mind for interlinking within your website.

This is easier to see in an illustration.

(Shown on the next page)



Let's consider the child pages.

The individual content pages (child) all link back up to the main silo page (parent).

The individual pages can link to other pages in the same silo – even to all the other pages – and to any of the other main silo pages (the uncle/aunt pages).

The child pages do not link directly to pages that are not in the same silo (cousin pages). Instead, they link to the main silo page (uncle/aunt) for that page (cousin).

The silo pages (parent) link to all of the pages in their silo (all the child pages).

The silo pages (parent) can optionally link to the other silo pages (sibling).

I like to keep things simple so I generally place the links within the text content of the pages. Some people follow very specific rules about where to place the links.

Examples of more specific rules are: 1) parent pages should only link to the children pages in the sidebar or at the bottom of the page, or 2) children pages link to the parent page in the first paragraph.

Adding Content & Ongoing Maintenance

Planning upfront for your website is extremely important. Planning well makes it easy to add more content to the site and stick to the silo structure. Generally, new content (i.e. the content added after launching your site) should fit into your silo structure...

Well, things change, and sometimes you need to publish content beyond original keyword research. Or, maybe the website has taken off and grown over time so you are publishing content that doesn't fit into the current silo structure. There is a way to address these situations.

Let's look at the first instance: adding content after site launch that fits into the silos structure.

Add the page with the new content

Select the correct "Parent" page (which should be a main silo page) to adhere to the site architecture that you carefully planned.

Link the new page (a child) appropriately within the website. At a minimum there should be a link to the main silo (parent) page. Optionally, there can be links to some or all of the sibling pages, and the page can also link to the other silo (uncle/aunt) pages.

Update the silo (parent) page with a link to the new

child page. This is not optional and is very important to help the new page index quickly.

The second scenario is when you add content that does not fit into an existing silo.

Once you identify a topic that can't be included in an existing silo, it means you should do more keyword research. You need to find as many other related keywords and topics

The goal is to identify enough new article topics to create a new silo. You can create a new silo. If you identify 5 or more new pages based on the keyword research

You need to add the new silo (parent) page of the silo to the main navigation of the site.

The new silo (parent) page of the silo can optionally have links to the other silo pages.

Manage your new main silo the same way you manage the others

Silo Summary

WordPress does not natively support a silo site structure.

Pages are the foundation for the site silo. The key is to use the built in parent/child hierarchy that WordPress supports.

Keywords drive the organization of the site, so do in depth keyword research.

The parent and child pages link together in a specific way to pass the most link juice while maintaining a positive user experience.

Content Creation Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Only publish original content
- Make your front page a “page” and not a “post” in theme settings
- Use the keyword in the title and meta description of the front page
- Consider outsourcing to generate content quickly
- Use a pseudonym to keep your site private
- Add images to make your site look professional and interesting
- Think about keywords to determine the silo topics.
- Have plenty of secondary keywords.

Don't

- Credit the writers if you outsource - make this clear in the job description
- Use online images without having permission
- Add any links to Amazon (you will do this later with your unique tracking code)
- Publish content without planning.
- Link child to child (cousins) across different silos.

Content Creation Task List

- Write the main post (2000 words) and publish.
- Write 5 additional posts that can be product reviews or related topics and publish.

Applying for Amazon Associates and Adding Affiliate Links

You are ready to apply for Amazon Associates. Amazon will process your application more quickly now that your website has plenty of content, a privacy policy, about me, and a contact page. This is how the web site will make money – helping people find the products they want to purchase.

Content Creation Task List

- How to Apply for Amazon Associates
- How to Add Amazon Links to Your Site

The Application

Go to <https://affiliate-program.amazon.com> and log in to your Amazon account. If you don't have one, create one now. If you are targeting an international Amazon Program, be sure to use the appropriate application.

For example, you would use <https://affiliate-program.amazon.co.uk/> in the UK or <https://partnernet.amazon.de/> in Germany.

All the information is pretty standard, like Name, Address, Phone Number, etc.

You will need to provide your url so Amazon can review your site. Be concise in your description and stick to the facts. If you followed the instructions for creating your web site then the approval should be quick.

Approval usually takes about 24 hours, but it could take up to a few days.

Tracking IDs

The tracking ID is a code that Amazon assigns to you to track sales that you generate from your website. You can modify your assigned tracking ID to something shorter as long as it is not already taken.

The tracking ID will be in the affiliate links for your site. Later, if you create more sites, you can create a new tracking ID for each website to track where the purchases originate.

When do I get my money? i.e. Payments for Affiliates

Fees are paid out on a monthly basis, approximately 60 days after the end of each month. If you have your first sale in January, for example, you will not receive that income until the end of March or early April.

What should I do about taxes, creating a company, or incorporating?

The details of taxes or legal implications are beyond the scope of this book. I do recommend that you create a separate banking account for your niche site income and expenditures.

Keeping a separate account will make it much easier to keep track of revenue and expenses.

Please seek professional legal and accounting advice for your local area.

Adding Links

Amazon makes it very easy to add links even though the process is not fast. When I first started building niche sites, I added links manually to keep the costs down.

This section shows the screen prints of the manual (and free) process to add links. First though, let me highlight a product that I now use and recommend to add links.

[EasyAzon](#)

EasyAzon is a huge time saver when creating links to Amazon. In addition, the creator of this plugin, Chris Guthrie, has been very successful using the Amazon Associate program.

EasyAzon takes the best practices that he has learned over the years and places them in this plugin (the image below shows what an EasyAzon info box looks like.

Don't leave money on the table

One of the biggest benefits is that EasyAzon has a built in automatic link localizer that will take your Amazon affiliate link and display a link for the Amazon locale based on who is visiting your website.

You can create affiliate links or enable link localization for any country where Amazon has an affiliate program. Check out EasyAzon since there is a 60 day Money Back Guarantee.

I like to add links to all images of products that I place in a post. Additionally, I find that it's very helpful to use the "Text and Image" option to place a box at the top left of each article. People recognize the Amazon logo and are willing to click on the links.

I didn't use the boxes because I thought that people would see them as too sales focused. After a month without the "**Text and Image**" boxes, I made a move to add the boxes to every page and the sales increased immediately.

People wanted to buy products and these boxes make it clear that clicking the box is an action to buy. You should experiment to find what works best for your niche.

Adding Links Manually

To add links manually, search in Amazon and click on “Link to this page” at the top of the webpage (located on the Amazon Associates bar). Then you can choose the option you want (**Text and Image**, **Text Only**, and **Image Only**).

(**NOTE:** I have edited my tracking ID in the examples for privacy).

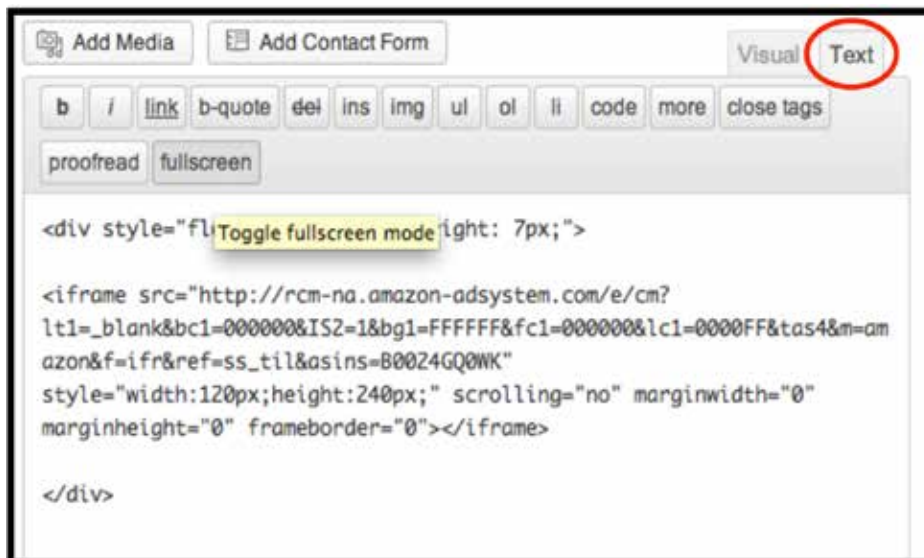
A screenshot of the Amazon Associates 'Link to this page' interface. The 'Text and Image' tab is selected and circled in red. The interface is divided into three sections: 1. Customize Link, 2. Live Preview, and 3. Get HTML Code For This Product Link. In the 'Customize Link' section, there are checkboxes for 'Open link in new window', 'Show border', and 'Use larger image', all of which are checked. Below these are input fields for 'Price Options' (set to 'Show All Prices'), 'Background Color' (set to 'FFFFFF'), 'Text Color' (set to '000000'), and 'Link Color' (set to '0000FF'). In the 'Live Preview' section, there is a preview of a product link for a 'VCAN V531 Cruiser Hat' with a 'Best Price' of '\$24.05' and a 'Buy from amazon.com' button. In the 'Get HTML Code For This Product Link' section, there is a text area containing the HTML code for the link, and a 'Highlight HTML' button circled in red.

Click the “Highlight HTML” button and then copy the text. (NOTE: I have edited my tracking ID for privacy)



Go over to your WordPress post and click on the “Text” tab.

Paste the HTML code that includes your Amazon Associate tracking ID.

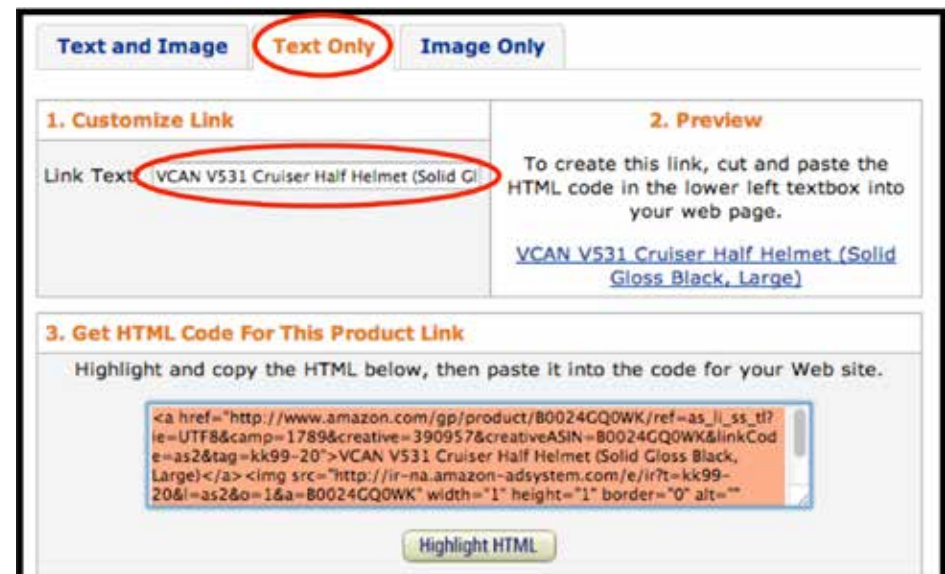


Adding a Text Link

Whenever I mention a product name in the text, I always provide a text link.

You can get the HTML code for that by clicking the “Link to this page” and selecting the Text Only tab. You can edit the “Link Text” in the first field located in section 1. **Customize Link**.

The link text will automatically update in the preview section. Once you finish editing, you can highlight the HTML text again and paste in your WordPress post as needed.



The idea is to provide every visitor many, many options to view products on Amazon. Don't try to be too clever and let Amazon do their job and convert sales!

TIP: Put this around the code snippet to provide some spacing around the box:

```
<div style="float: left; margin-right: 7px;"> HTML_FROM_
AMAZON </div>
```

Amazon Associates and Affiliate Links Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Be concise in your application and stick to the facts
- Create a system to track payments separate for tax purposes
- Consider investing in EasyAzon to add links
- Place a "Text and Image" link at the top left of all posts

Don't

- Expect to get paid immediately - Amazon sends payments ~60 days after the end of each month

Amazon Associates and Affiliate Links Task List

- Apply for the Amazon Associate program
- Add links from Amazon to your main page
- Add links from Amazon to your other pages
- Audit to make you sure all your links work correctly

Promotion, Link Building, and Outreach

Your website relies on Google for free traffic, so the goal is to make sure that Google looks upon your site favorably. To generalize, Google uses the number of links pointing to your site as the main factor in ranking your website. There are hundreds of other factors in the Google algorithm, but link building is our focus to obtain high rankings.

What You Will Learn

- Effective Blog Commenting
- How to Take Advantage of CommentLuv
- Which Social Profiles You Should Create
- Benefits of Google Authorship
- Article Directories to Use
- Web Directories to Use
- Web 2.0 Blogs

Blog Commenting

You should start commenting once you have your first post published. This will give Google something to follow back to your site.

Be sure to offer value in your comments if possible,

but you can also be pretty generic and compliment the blogger on a well written post on the topic.

I created a daily task for myself to comment on 5 blogs which only takes a few minutes. It's really powerful if you keep it up every day; in just one week you could potentially have 35 links back to your website. Do this for a few weeks and you have a large number of backlinks.

Please note that you do need other kind of links for most niches so you have some diversity in your backlink profile.

Here are some ways to find blogs to comment on:

CommentLuv

This is a WordPress plugin that automatically places a link to the commenter's last WordPress blog post at the end of their comment.

It can be very powerful since most of the time your name is the anchor text that links to your domain. In the case of CommentLuv, you get the link to your site with your name and you get a link back to your latest post.

Use the search below and then filter the results in

Google to look at only the most recent results.

“[keyword]” + CommentLuv

So if Pat Flynn from SPI was going to comment on a site with CommentLuv, you can see the plugin automatically pulls the recent posts. CommentLuv will add the link automatically.

Here are a couple other ways to search for blogs to comment on:

- “[keyword]” + “(URLs automatically linked.)”
-”moderated”
- “[keyword]” + site:.edu inurl:blog “post a comment”
-”you must be logged in”
- “[keyword]” + site:.gov inurl:blog “post a comment”
-”you must be logged in”
- “[keyword]” + “Enter YourName@YourKeywords”
- “[keyword]” + “get livefyre” “comment help”
-”Comments have been disabled for this post”

Social Profiles

You should create social profiles even if you don’t plan on being active.

Just having the link to your website in the profiles is great and gives your website credibility (this task lends

itself to outsourcing through a company like fivrr if you don’t want to complete it yourself).

Once you have more content up, you will be able to spend more time on the social profiles.

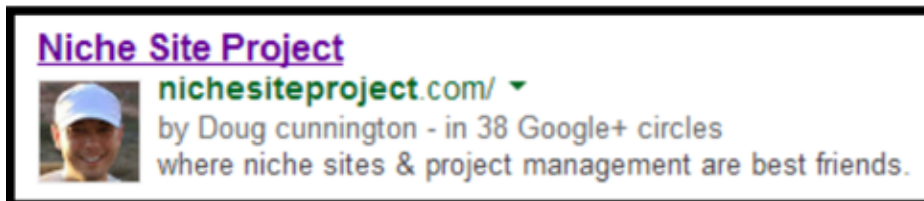
You may find that your niche has an active twitter population, so spending time cultivating the audience there might be worthwhile at a later point.

Click the links below to get started with social profiles:

- <http://www.plus.google.com>
- <http://www.youtube.com>
- <http://www.facebook.com>
- <http://twitter.com>
- <http://www.delicious.com>
- <http://www.gravatar.com>
- <http://www.linkedin.com>

Google Authorship

Google Authorship adds some authority to your website in the SERPs by showing your byline next to the results. (Google no longer shows an image of your Google Plus Profile.)



Make sure you have an email address on your domain. It makes the process much easier.

A screenshot of a Google+ comment form. The 'Website' field contains 'http://smartpassiveincome.com'. The 'Comment' field is empty. Below the form is a 'Post Comment' button. Below the button is a red oval highlighting a link: 'Niche Site Duel 2.4.0 – Pat's Food Truck Niche Website Revealed! (Part 1)'. Below the oval are two more links: 'Niche Site Duel 2.4.0 – Pat's Food Truck Niche Website Revealed! (Part 1)' and 'SPI 086 : Everything from iPhone Apps to Adsense, Twitter and Klout – Fireside with Joel Comm'.

It takes just a few minutes to set up here: <https://plus.google.com/authorship>. However, it might take a couple weeks to show up in the search results. Test it here <http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/richsnippets> right after you confirm the email and put the link in Yoast SEO plugin.

For the next three sections, you should have 25% of your links going to your main url, <http://YourKeywordsHere.com/>. The other 75% of the link should be to other pages.

Go after one of the secondary long tail keywords to get it to rank fast! This is a powerful way to get your domain some serious authority!

Article Directories

UPDATED: Article directories are not as effective in 2015 as they used to be. Some people still like to use article directories for link building but I don't find them to be a good use of my time nowadays.

These links add to the diversity of the backlink profile. They each have a registration process and usually there is a manual approval of your profile as well as each of your articles.

Speaking of articles, you will want to write something unique for each of the submissions. If you can get one article in each of these directories that will be 7 links and maybe more depending on what you can add to the author biography or resource boxes.

Per Wikipedia: An **article directory** is a website with collections of articles written about different subjects. Sometimes article directories are referred to as content farms, which are websites created to produce mass content.

<http://www.goarticles.com>

<http://www.articlesbase.com>

<http://www.articlecity.com>

<http://www.sooperarticles.com>

<http://www.articlesfactory.com>

<http://www.amazines.com>

<http://www.bukisa.com>

Web Directories

These links are powerful because the domains have such a long history. The down side is that they cost money to register on but this could give you an edge over your competition.

Per Wikipedia: A **web directory** or link directory is a directory on the World Wide Web. It specializes in linking to other web sites and categorizing those links.

Visit each site to check on the latest costs to have your site listed.

- <http://botw.org>
- <http://joeant.com>
- <http://www.cannylink.com>
- <http://www.business.com/directory>
- <http://www.somuch.com>

Web 2.0 - Free Blogs

All these blogs are free to register and you fully control the content. Keep the names generic so it doesn't appear their only purpose is linking to an affiliate niche site.

Here are a couple reasonable names: *janes-adventure-in-spain.tumblr.com* or *life-and-times-2013.weebly.com*

Here are a couple poor names: *bestmotorcyclehelmet.tumblr.com* or *topratedmotorcyclehelmet.weebly.com*

TIP: This would be a good job to outsource using oDesk. You could hire a contractor to create an email account, all the accounts, and all of the content depending on the topic.

Add at least 3 articles with a minimum of 300 words on each of the blogs before adding links out to your site.

Just link 1 or 2 blog posts to your articles on your website, not all of them. In addition, link to other non-competing, relevant domains.

For example, link to the manufacturer's website for related products. If someone investigates your niche site backlink profile they will be able to see these Web 2.0 sites, but with links to other websites it makes it harder to pinpoint them as link building tools.

Here is a list of sites that allow you to create a free account.

- <http://www.wordpress.com>
- <http://www.tumblr.com>
- <http://www.blog.com>
- <http://www.blogspot.com>
- <http://www.weebly.com>
- <http://www.livejournal.com>
- <http://www.webs.com>

Outreach

There are 3 main Steps:

1. Finding a popular topic
2. Create a super high quality resource on the topic
3. Execute the outreach plan and ask for links

You should have a good idea of the main topics in your niche after your keyword research.

Your goal is to create an epic piece of content for your niche and market. The content needs to fill in the gaps where other sources of information fail.

One key thing to note is that this content needs to be generally free of affiliate links. It should be pure content - helpful, interesting, and shareable.

The idea is to earn backlinks for this piece of great content -- then you can add a backlink to the post or page with the affiliate backlink.

You control where the link juice goes within your site, and you send that link juice from a post or page without affiliate links to a post or page with affiliate links. It's easier to get backlinks from other webmasters using this method.

The Topic

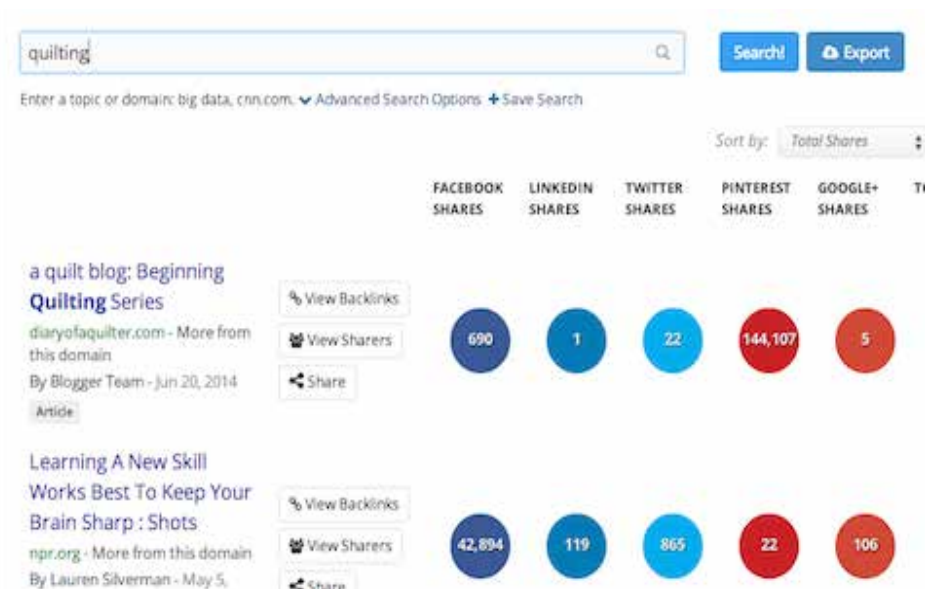
Here is how you can find the right kind of topic.

Option 1:

Head over to buzzsumo.com. Buzzsumo searches content on a topic that has the most shares from social networks.

You can see what topics are popular in your niche.

Let's take a look at an example: quilting.



Note: If you search for something and see a lot of very popular posts that were published on news sites, then you should skip those.

They received their shares mostly due to the high visibility of their brand.

We are looking for smaller blogs or at least websites that are not massively popular household names.

So, skip the Huffington Post, CNN, & New York Times. News Source results occur more often for general terms - for instance, searching for "guitar."

You should be able to find a couple good articles once you refine your search term in your niche.

Go to those sources and read them thoroughly.

If they provide references, go read those too. Review all of the comments on the articles so you can see the kinds of questions that readers are asking.

Option 2:

Quora is a question & answer style website. The good part is they have upvotes and downvotes for each topic.

You can enter in your topic and find out what people are asking about, and even better, you can see some of the best answers on the topic.

Option 3:

Next, check out the top 10 results in Google. Google some of the terms and phrases from the articles you researched.

Anything in the top 10 has certainly generated some backlinks.

You can use the Mozbar to check to see the backlink and authority stats right in the search results page. Add these articles to your list to analyze further.

Quilting Resources Galore Paradise Fibers

www.paradisefibers.com/quilting-resources ▼

Quilting has been around since the early days of the Mongolian empire and Middle Ages. Learn about the history of quilting, where to get supplies and techniques.

Quilting Resources - Piecemeal Quilts

piecemealquilts.com/quilting-resources/ ▼

There is so much information available in cyberspace for the quilter, but where do you find it? And how do you find the really good stuff? For every really good ...

APQS - Longarm & Quilting Resources & Education

www.apqs.com/quilting-r... ▼ APQS. American Professional Quilting Systems ▼

We know how intimidating the longarm quilting world can be – especially if you're a novice. Our goal is to help you learn as much as possible about longarm ...

Quilts. Resources | PBS

www.pbs.org/americaquilts/resources/ ▼ PBS ▼

Quilting Resources. Quilter Web Sites: Visit Web sites of some of our featured quilters. Online Resources & Organizations: Explore the range of resources ...

Quilting Resources - North Idaho Quilters

www.niqnews.com/quilting%20resources.htm ▼

Guild members: If you are a long arm quilter or do hand quilting and would like to have your name added to this list, please send your request and information to: ...

FAQs - Keepsake Quilting

www.keepsakequilting.com/resources.aspx ▼

America's Favorite Quilt Shop! Largest online quilting and quality quilt fabric supplier! Quilt fabrics, Medley's, sewing notions, quilting books, patterns and kits!

Quilting Resources - Quilting Board

www.quiltingboard.com/resources/ ▼

Quilting Board - Powered by vBulletin. Remember Me? Help ... Quilting Resources ... General Chit-Chat (non-quilting talk). Do you think it is too old?

Creating the content

When you read the articles that you find in your research, be sure to look at the comments and responses very carefully. Understanding the questions that people had after reading the article helps you to identify any gaps in the information.

You can ensure that your content answers those questions or points of contention to make your content the best resource out there.

If it's a list-style post (like 20 Top Tips for Your-topic), then you can consolidate the various sources to create 80 Top Tips. You might be able to identify tips or items that are out of date. Those are perfect to revise and update for your list.

You should always provide a reference for your sources - which we can use to our advantage later by notifying the source that they were referenced. In some cases the author may even share the content or link to it.

The Content

Create an outline of what you want to cover in your epic piece of content. Integrate the ideas that you identified as gaps in the existing resources. The goal is to create a better, more complete resource for your niche.

The Length

Aim for 2,000 words or more, up to about 10,000, for

the content length. There is less competition for long form content. It is hard to create a well researched piece of content. Even more compelling is that okdork & quicksprout did a study about Why Content Goes Viral, and the overall length was a key component.

Design & Images

It doesn't have to be beautiful but it needs to be pleasant to look at. Remember, that we want people to share this content, so aesthetics are important. You should have at least one image, if not more. Graphics help to break up the text which is important since in long articles.

Custom images are a nice touch and they can be integral to get shares on Facebook or Pinterest. I use a tool called Piktochart that makes it super easy to create custom images. It's faster and cheaper than hiring a VA for graphics. The tool is more for infographics but you can just make banner images with great looking fonts and colors.

You can create banners for each section of your article, as well, to compliment the Headings (H1, H2, or H3, etc...) and help break up the text.

Ask For Backlinks

Most niches have a decent number of blogs or websites with Resource pages. If you create a truly great piece

of content, it should be a no brainer that the owner of the blog will want to link to your content.

The trick is finding the right Resource pages and contacting the webmasters or site owners and asking for a link. Note: don't expect to receive a link from every outreach effort, even with truly great content. Success rate are usually fairly low, 5 - 10% in most cases.

Resource Page outreach

- “keyword” + inurl:resources
- “keyword” + inurl:links
- “keyword” + “helpful resources”
- “keyword” + “useful links”

This is the perfect kind of task to outsource on oDesk or Elance. You can ask the VA to look up the first 100 search results for each of the sample queries above.

The VA can list the website, URL for the resources page, contact email or contact form page, and any other information you may find useful.

Here is the quilting example.

Here is a sample of what you might say in an email to the website owner.

Subject: About your resource page...

Hi <name>,

I found your website the other day. Great Stuff!

The Resource page is top notch. I found a couple of the links truly helpful - like <list an example>.

I actually just put the finishing touches on a new piece <your-epic-content>. It's about <thesis of your content>:

<URL-for-the-epic-content>

It might make a nice addition to your page. Either way, keep up the great work you're doing with SITE.

Thanks & Talk soon,

<your-name>

Search for Sites That Want to Link to Your Resource

This is very similar to the last step but it takes it a step further. You target websites that link to content similar to your epic content in the context of their writing. It's even more powerful (in most cases) than the links on the resource pages.

Refer back to the pages you found with Buzzsumo &

Google. You can expand your search in Google and review the top 25 - 50 results, too.

Keep a list of the URLs for those top web pages, and head over to ahrefs, majestic, & moz to use their Site Explorers. I have the free versions of those tools so the functionality is limited, but still gives the backlinks for those popular web pages.

You end up with a list of web pages that link to those top articles from Buzzsumo & Google.

Ask for the link:

Subject: About <title-of-web-page-that-links>...

Hi <name>,

I found your post <title-of-web-page-that-links> the other day. Great Stuff!

I found it truly helpful - like <list-an-example> - because <something-relevant>. And, <list-another-example> was something I never thought about before!

I actually just put the finishing touches on a new piece <your-epic-content>. It's about <thesis of your content>:

<URL-for-the-epic-content>

It might make a nice addition to your web page. Either way, keep up the great work you're doing with SITE.

Thanks & Talk soon,

<your-name>

Conclusion

It's a long process - from researching the topic to writing the content to manual, cold outreach.

However, these are the kind of backlinks that your competition won't have so they are a big differentiator.

Keep in mind that it is hard work to get backlinks this way. You may only get a 5 to 15% success rate from the email outreach campaign.

People are busy and get a lot of emails, or maybe they aren't even updating their website anymore.

Don't be discouraged by a low response rate.

The links you do receive are your reward for the hard work.

Promotion, Link Building and Outreach Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Start commenting early on related sites
- Create social profiles – it gives your website credibility
- Use Google Authorship – it gives your website authority
- Post unique content to article directories
- Consider web directories if the cost isn't prohibitive
- Research the popular topics carefully using Buzz Sumo
- Read and understand the current content - more importantly, understand the gaps that exist in this content
- Be sure to fill the gaps in the existing content to create a better resource than the others

- Write excellent content that is worthy of being linked to and shared
- Add backlinks to the existing content - be generous and give your resources backlinks as well

Don't

- Title a free blog with your keywords
- Link only to your niche site from free blogs (continued)
- Title a free blog with your keywords
- Link only to your niche site from free blogs (continued)
- Give too much credit to large websites that get lots of shares for an article (like Huffington Post, CNN, & New York Times, etc...)
- Add affiliate backlinks to the content

Promotion, Link Building and Outreach Task List

- Create list of relevant blogs for link building (goal ~200 blogs)
- Create social profiles
- Submit to web directories
- Create a wordpress.com blog and publish 3 articles
- Create a tumblr.com blog and publish 3 articles
- Create a blog.com blog and publish 3 articles
- Create a blogspot.com blog and publish 3 articles
- Create a weebly.com blog and publish 3 articles
- Create a livejournal.com blog and publish 3 articles
- Create a webs.com blog and publish 3 articles

Promotion, Link Building and Outreach Worksheet

[Link to Google Document of this worksheet.](#)

Website		Comment Date
www.examplewebsite.com		1/1/2014
Consider Creating and/or Posting to the Following:		
Social Profiles		Article Directories
http://www.plus.google.com		http://www.goarticles.com
http://www.youtube.com		http://www.articlesbase.com
http://www.facebook.com		http://www.articlecity.com
http://twitter.com		http://www.soooperarticles.com
http://www.delicious.com		http://www.articlesfactory.com
http://www.gravatar.com		http://www.amazines.com
http://www.linkedin.com		http://www.bukisa.com
Web Directories		Free Blogs
http://botw.org		http://www.wordpress.com
http://joeant.com		http://www.tumblr.com
http://www.cannylink.com		http://www.blog.com
http://www.business.com/directory		http://www.blogspot.com
http://www.somuch.com		http://www.weebly.com
		http://www.livejournal.com
		http://www.webs.com

Ranking Checkpoint

You can assess your website's progress by checking your Google ranking. Initially, your website will show up very low in the Google searches - in the hundreds - so that will be several pages back.

This is completely normal with new websites. It is very exciting to see your website move up in the rankings.

Your website ranks low initially because it has not built up any credibility in the form of backlinks or visitor interaction.

Over time, your website will gain credibility and periodically checking the Google search ranking of your website will allow you to track the results.

Checking the ranking of your web site is essential to track the progress of your link building efforts. It can be tempting to check your rankings all the time. After all, it is fun to see your work pay off in the form of improved rankings.

But you should probably limit the number of times you check the rankings so that you use your time efficiently. It is recommended to check your rankings once per week.

There are many ways to check your rankings but we will outline four methods.

What You Will Learn

- Manually check your rankings using Google Search.
- Check your rankings in Google Webmaster Tools.
- Check your rankings using Long Tail Pro.
- Check your rankings using semrush.

Five Ways to Check Your Rankings

I will present five methods for checking your rankings. Some are free but slow, and another is pay but is very fast and convenient.

If you plan on managing more than one website, the pay method is definitely worth the cost; searching through Google Results pages is time consuming.

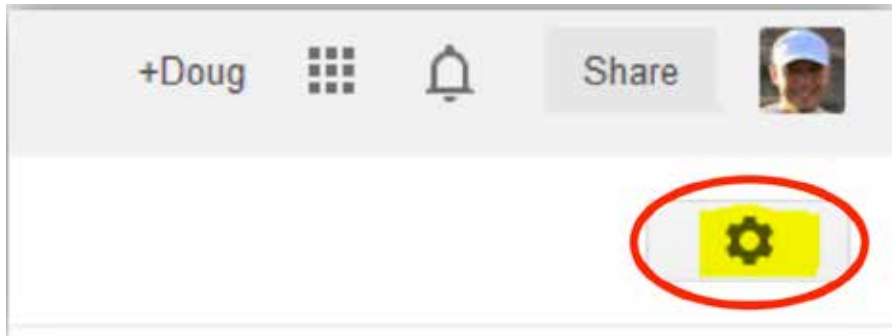
Manually Review the Search Engine Results Pages (SERP)

This is the most time consuming way to check where your website ranks in the Google results.

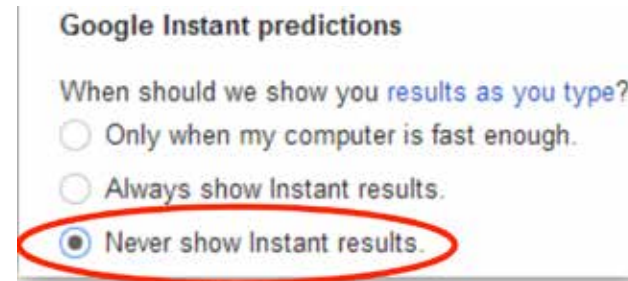
You type in the targeted keyword or keyword phrase into the search field in Google. You then look through all the search results to find your ranking.

To speed up the process, you can change the default Google Search Settings to show 100 results on one page instead of 10.

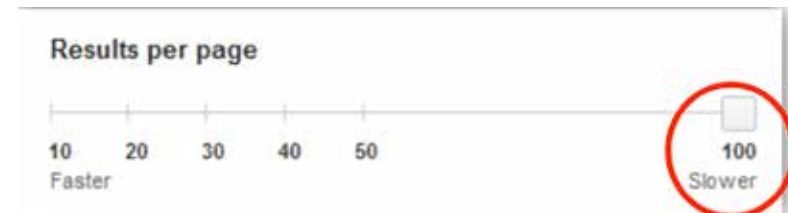
1. Click on the Settings Cog and then on the “Search Settings” menu item.



2. In the Google Instant Predictions section, click the “Never show Instant results” option.



3. In the “Results per page” section, click on 100.



4. In the “Private Results” section, click on “Do not use private results.” (This ensures that the search results are not taking into account your personal searching history or the data that Google gathered based on your interaction with the Google Platform).



5. Scroll to the bottom and click on the “Save” button.



Saved settings are available whenever you sign in.

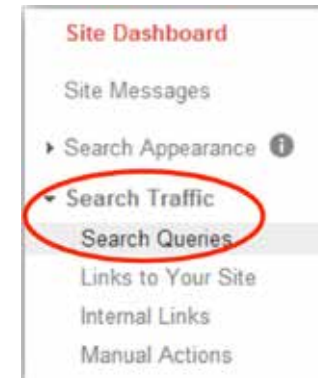
Google Webmaster Tools

Google Webmaster Tools is a faster way to determine where your website ranks with Google. It does require that you set up your website to interact with Webmaster Tools (if you have not done this, here is a [link to Google](#) for more information).

1. Once you are in Webmaster Tools, click on your website.
2. In the navigation pane on the left side, click on

“Search Traffic” to open up the menu.

3. Then click on “Search Queries” which should be the first option in the section.



4. The “Search Queries” display should open in the main viewing area of your browser. You will be able to see all the searches that return your website - this is labeled “Query.” The field on the far right, “Avg. position,” is the one that you are interested in. This value is the average ranking in the Google search results.



Query	Impressions	Clicks +	CTR	Avg. position
niche site project	<10	<10	-	14

Please note that this tool provides data based on the last 30 days by default. You can change the evaluation period by adjusting the dates in the top right of the viewing section.

The tool returns the following information:

- Queries - These are the search terms that users typed into Google to find your website.
- Impressions - This is the number of times pages from your site appeared in search results.
- Clicks - The number of times a user clicked your site's listing in search results for a particular query.
- CTR (click through rate) - The percentage of impressions that resulted in a click to your site.
- Average position - The average top position of your site on the search results page for that query.

Long Tail Pro

This is the preferred method for checking your ranking. It is both faster and easier than the previously mentioned methods. Before [Long Tail Pro](#), I spent considerable time checking on my rankings. What used to take 15 minutes now only takes about 15 seconds. You get your rankings in seconds simply by entering the URL and search terms, and you can save your searches.

How Often Should You Check the Rankings?

You should check your ranking approximately once a week. An accurate knowledge of your ranking allows you to effectively plan your link building strategy. It is tempting to check a couple times a day, which is

okay, but make sure that you are not wasting a lot of time looking at statistics when your time is better spent elsewhere.

It takes about a week for Google to index your links and to update your ranking, so don't be alarmed if there isn't immediate movement in your ranking after a link campaign.

Another Free Option

One other option to check your rankings is SEM Rush. At the time of this writing, it is possible to check the rankings for a keyword and url on a limited basis if you sign up for a free account with semrush.

Another Paid Option

SerpBook is a great option for automated emails with your ranking information. It is fast to configure, inexpensive, and accurate. It's what I use to check my rankings now.

Ranking Checkpoint Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Check your rankings periodically, about once a week.
- Pick the right free or paid method of checking your rank.

Don't

- Get worried if your site starts very low in the search engine rankings.
- Obsess over rankings and check too often.

Adding More Content

Your first run of content on the website (2000+ word front page and 5+ article reviews is only the beginning. Google likes to see new content added to your website over time.

It is a sign that you, as the webmaster, are working to provide new information to your visitors. That's a good thing in the eyes of Google.

What You Will Learn

- Tips for Adding More Content
- Outsourcing Tips

More Product Reviews

You should add one or two articles per week that review products in your niche. You can also write a few articles that do not review products specifically but cover a topic in your niche.

Those articles can have links to products that are naturally discussed in your content. The goal is to have about 25 or more product reviews, but add as many that are relevant to your niche. Aim for at least 500 words per article.

Improve Your Front Page Article

Review your main page article. Can you add more information now that you have more knowledge about the topic?

If so, make the updates and edits. A longer article, 4000 to 5000 words, will give your site more opportunities to attract long tail search traffic.

Opportunity for Outsourcing

This is a great time to outsource the work since you should be spending time building links and networking with other webmasters.

Again, Text Broker is a great service - predictable and fast – although it can become expensive depending on your budget.

You can create a job posting on oDesk to assist with content creation, but you will spend more time managing the process since you work directly with a contractor.

The trade-off is this can be less expensive than Text Broker.

Experience outsourcing is important if you think you might want to scale the business someday. Start small and give it a try – most people will work on a trial basis for a few articles.

Adding More Content Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Adding content over time is a good sign to Google. Keep adding until you have at least 25 articles
- Improve or add to your front page article to attract more search traffic
- If you haven't tried outsourcing, now is a good time!

Don't

- Neglect your website. If you want your website to survive and prosper over time you must keep it

Optimizing for Conversion

Your website should have users visiting your site now and we can focus a little more on conversion to sales. Mainly, we want people to click one of your affiliate links to view and eventually purchase products on Amazon.

We don't need to overthink this because Amazon does a stellar job at selling; our goal is to get the visitor to click the link to get to Amazon.

What You Will Learn

- Conducting a Self-Audit on Your Site
- Finding Related Products to Review

Self-Audit

This is an exercise to make sure you are giving visitors an opportunity to click an affiliate link over to Amazon.

Text and Image Links

Did you put image boxes at the top left of each article? If you have not done this yet, do it now. This is exactly the spot that every single visitor to that page looks when they start reading.

The box is highly effective and that is the reason that Amazon has this type of box as the default option for

adding an affiliate link to a product.

Text Links

Do you have links in the text throughout the article? Whenever you mention the product name in the text, you should add a link.

You should state the item name at least three times in the article.

Image Links

Do you have images throughout the article? You should use the images that Amazon provides and use the linked images as demonstrated in the Adding Affiliate Links section.

Sometimes Amazon will have other images in the item details so feel free to download those images and use them in your content.

Make sure each of your posts and pages with content have a "Picture and Text" box with a related product at the top left of the content. People will look there first and their eyes will be moving to that area over and over as they read the first few lines of content.

Different ways to link to Amazon

Use a call to action by adding bold, large, blue text in the spaces between paragraphs with a statement like “Click Here To Check Out Some of The Best Prices For [product name] Now at Amazon! Discount Available!” It should look something like this:

**Click Here To Check Out Some of The Best
Motorcycle Helmets Now at Amazon.com! Huge
Discount Available!**

This is a bold call to action that captures attention. Blue is the most common color for links so visitors know this is a link.

You don’t want to have this type of link all over the page but it is ideal to have one of these on the screen most of the time as a visitor is scrolling down reading your content. Use them sparingly – I advise one per 600 words.

TIP: For example, if your niche is kitchen tables, then kitchen chairs, tablecloths, table runners, and silverware are closely related. You should do keyword research to see if you can target a search term related to any of the related items.

Targeting Related Products

Your domain now has some strength and you have

regular traffic visiting your website. It is time to use that domain authority and target profitable long tail keywords.

This is a way you can potentially increase your traffic and subsequent revenue.

Finding related items

You probably have seen some related products that might interest your visitors. Think about products that are closely related to your main keywords.

Maybe you saw some of these keywords as secondary keywords initially. Occasionally, you can get lucky and it might be another big ticket item.

For example, if your primary target product was electric lawnmowers, you might be able to target electric string trimmers. Another example is motorcycle helmet and motorcycle gloves.

Amazon makes it very easy if you pay attention to their recommendations. Do your keyword research on the recommended items and you will be able create new articles targeting those items. If the search volume warrants the effort, you can work on ranking for these related items or secondary item keywords to drive additional traffic to your site.

Optimizing for Conversion Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Click every link to make sure it is working
- Check the top left of each article for an image link
- Include text links and the name of the item at least 3 times per article
- Use “call to actions” once per every 600 words
- Look for secondary keywords for related items to your niche

Don't

- Make your site look spammy with too many images, text links, and “call to actions.”

Backlink Profile Analysis & Advanced Link Building

Now that you have plenty of content and experience link building, you need to make sure that you have the right anchor text in your articles.

We like to have a specific amount of exact keyword matches, partial matches, and generic text. We will discuss examples of each.

What You Will Learn

- Why Anchor Text is Important
- Recommended Distribution of Anchor Text for Backlinks

What is Anchor Text?

Anchor Text is the text that appears highlighted in a hypertext link and that can be clicked to open the target web page.

Why do we care about the distribution of anchor text?

Because Google cares.

Previously, the webmasters of the internet would generate a huge number of links with the exact match text of the targeted keyword.

This worked for a while and many people took advantage of the situation.

Later, Google adjusted their algorithm to take this into account. The result is that we need to make sure we have a “natural looking” backlink profile.

mozBar (Toolbar)

First off, let's get an idea how your page is doing. Go to your url and see what the mozBar tells you. You can see how your website ranks for the individual pages for Page Authority (PA), MozRank (mR), and how the domain ranks for Domain Authority.



From moz.com: MozRank represents a link popularity score. It reflects the importance of any given web page on the Internet.

Pages earn MozRank by the number and quality of other pages that link to them. The higher the quality of the incoming links, the higher the MozRank.

Majestic SEO and ahrefs

Let's review some tools that will show us additional detail. You can see your backlink profile to ensure your anchor text is in line with our acceptable range.

If you are not, you can create an action plan to

correct the link profile so that your site will be in the recommended threshold.

Sign up for free accounts at both Majestic and ahrefs for more functionality. The subscriptions are worth it if you have several websites. Here are the guidelines:

fiverr.com for Insulated Link Building

I want to share a practice with you that I developed using fiverr that can make a HUGE difference.

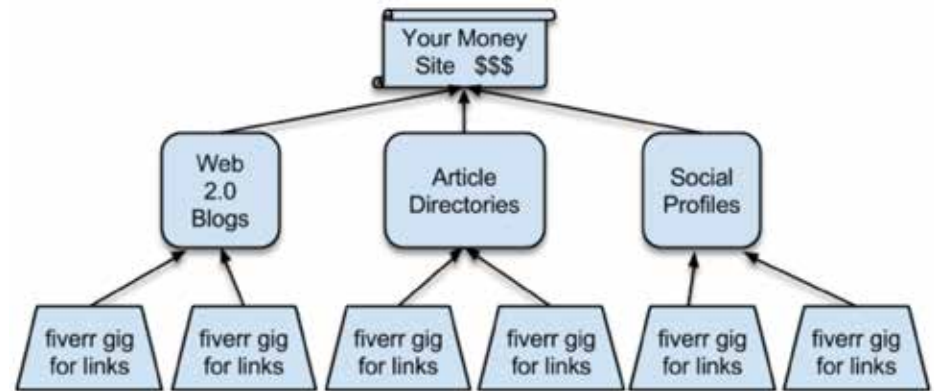
I did not make up the linking structure or method but I decided that using fiverr to build links could be risky.

This is a hybrid model that mitigates the risk.

- 1 - 5% of the anchor text as exact match for our keyword (best motorcycle helmet)
- 20 - 25% of the anchor text as a partial match (find a motorcycle helmet, get the best motorcycle helmet)
- 25 - 35% as the url match (iBestMotorcycleHelmetHQ.com)
- 30 - 35% as no match or generic (Click Here, This Website, etc...)

You don't want to have poor quality, spammy links pointing to your money site (your money making site).

However, you can add links pointing to your Tier 1 (that's the first set of sites- social profiles, article directories, web directories, and web 2.0 blogs) with a little less caution.



You can find many fiverr gigs that use automated software to create 100s or 1000s of links to point to your Tier 1. Look for “High Rating” gigs in the Online Marketing category, in the subcategories for SEO, Bookmarking & Links.

To get started, you would buy a gig and have the contractor link to one of your Web 2.0 blogs. Buy another gig that links to another one of your Web 2.0 Blogs. Do the same for your articles.

I can suggest some good providers if you need direction. The key here is that you are not pointing to your money site but the other sites (Tier 1) that link to your money site.

Wikipedia

This is much more challenging but it is a **free way to get powerful links from Wikipedia**. At this point, you should have high quality content and some solid knowledge about your niche even if you weren't familiar before you started the project.



Create a page on your site that is free of affiliate links and any other type of sales oriented ideas. If your theme allows you to have a landing page without any sidebars, then you should use it. You want to present your site as authoritative as possible.

Check out all the related pages on Wikipedia and look for gaps in content. Create an account and wait a day or two (you don't want to look too eager). Try to edit an unrelated page, truly adding value and reference a real authority website or legitimate news site.

After that link sticks try to make an edit to one relevant article and link to your authoritative landing page as well as at least one other authority site. The key is to try not to look suspicious and to also add value.

Your links and edits might be rejected and noted as spam. But, you know, they might not and you'll have a **powerful link from Wikipedia**.

Backlink Profile Analysis & Advanced Link Building Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Use MozBar to analyze your PA and DA
- Keep your anchor text in line with acceptable ranges. Use Majestic SEO and ahrefs for the analysis
- Use “Insulated Link Building” techniques to protect your money site (consider using fiverr)
- Investigate the prospect of adding a link to Wikipedia - it could be a long shot but would be worth it

Don't

- Overload your anchor text with exact keyword matches

Link Building with Private Blog Networks

I heard about Private Blog Networks, or PBNs for short, around the same time that I heard about niche websites. PBNs are very exciting and very powerful. PBNs can also be confusing and slightly complicated to set up for a novice, or even an experienced internet marketer. There are many moving parts to a PBN and several failure points.

What You Will Learn

- Definition of a PBN
- Why create a PBN
- Why expired domains are authoritative
- Finding expired domains
- Hosting considerations
- Content considerations
- Outbound linking from PBNs

What is a Private Blog Network or PBN?

A private blog network (PBN) is a set of domains that you or another individual owns. It is possible to have a PBN consisting of free blogs, like wordpress.com,

tumblr.com, or livejournal.com. Typically, the free blog domains do not have as much power as self-hosted blogs.

[Take a look here to view my infographic on PBNs.](#)

For this conversation, we will consider non-free blog platforms that are self-hosted.

In most cases, a PBN is made up from expired domains. An expired domain is a domain that was owned at one time and had content – the website was lived in and the webmaster cared for the site.

In fact, the webmaster probably created a nice website that attracted visitors and even had other websites link to the domain.

Great!

For whatever reason, the webmaster decided he or she didn't want to own the domain anymore, and let the domain registration expire.

When a domain is no longer registered, anyone can buy it for the normal registration fee, normally about \$10 – \$15 US dollars.

In contrast, there used to be a few public blog networks (like BuildMyRank and Linkvana) in the pre-Penguin and pre-Panda world. The public networks allowed anyone to buy links or guest posts. In early 2012, Google decided to deindex links from some public blog networks.

Deindexing the networks removed any value provided by the backlinks to websites. These public blog networks, were easy to identify and deindex since they were accessible to everyone (hence, the importance of a private blog network).

Why would someone create a PBN?

A PBN is powerful because you control the content and you control the links within the domain. This means that you can create or alter the content so it relates specifically to your niche.

Even more important is that you can create and alter the anchor text that links to your website. (Anchor text is the text that appears as a hyperlink – it's what you click on to go to another site.)

In addition, an expired domain is likely to pass along a good amount of link juice to any website with a link from it. Link juice can be thought of as ranking power – so an expired domain can pass more ranking power than a brand new domain.

Why does an expired domain pass more link juice than a brand new domain? Because an expired domain carries more authority.

Why do expired domains have more authority?

There are two main reasons why expired domains pass more link juice. The first and less important reason is that Google places some value on the age of the domain.

If you can find an expired domain that has been around since 2008, that domain is generally more authoritative and passes more link juice than a domain created in 2014.

The second and more important reason an expired domain has more link juice is the **backlink profile**. The backlink profile is the general makeup of the backlinks to a domain. Here, we are talking about the backlinks for an expired domain.

It's worth noting that the backlink profile takes things into account like:

- The total number of backlinks.
- The total number of linking domains.
- The total number of linking IP addresses.
- The link location on a post or page.

- The anchor text of the link.
- The title tag of the link.
- If the link is from an image.
- If the link is in the comments.
- If the link is do-follow or no-follow.

Ideally, we would want to see a number (more than 10) of natural links from related websites. For example, if the domain was about home improvements, we hope to see many links from home improvement blogs with varying anchor text.

It is ideal to see high authority and quality websites linking to the expired domains. Jon Haver, from Authority Website Income, published an excellent guide on analyzing backlinks for an expired domain.

How do you find expired domains?

Finding a high quality expired domain is a long, fairly complicated process. It is not easy. I personally have two sources that I turn to: expirreddomains.net

It is time consuming but free.

expirreddomains.net

Expirreddomains.net provides lists of dropped domains each day. There are many thousands of domains dropped every day, however, only a small fraction of the

dropped domains are valuable to us as part of a PBN.

The problem is that there are many domains with high authority statistics, but they were used for spamming the internet for pharmaceuticals, gambling, or porn.

Those domains are of no value to us. Most likely they are not valuable for the spammers; otherwise they would have kept the domain.

Sign up for a free account with expirreddomains.net to get access to the drop lists. There are filters that can help you sort through the large volume.

The filters work very well and you can customize your column headings to exactly what you want to see. As a starting point, I look at domains with a Page Authority (PA) over 25 and Domain Authority (DA) over 20, and I may raise those numbers based on the results. A couple other criteria I might use is at least 20 backlinks and 10 referring domains (called min SEO kicks Domain Pop in the filter).

If I find a potential domain, I will check out its history. I review the backlink profile and the archived pages on the Wayback Machine.

For the backlink profile, I use free accounts at Majestic SEO and ahrefs. Normally, a quick glance at the top 10 backlinks gives me a pretty good idea about the history of the domain.

If the backlinks look okay, I head over to archive.org's Wayback Machine to investigate the archive pages. I typically look at the last instance of the site first – just the home page. If there is not anything suspicious, I will spot check the archived pages over the last several years.

expireddomains.net is very good for a free service.

The good:

- An account is free.
- The lists are comprehensive.
- It's possible to find a great domain with high authority.

The bad:

- Slight learning curve dealing with filters.
- Difficult to review the quality of domains.
- The process is time consuming.
- It's possible to find a domain that looks great but is really a dud.
- You could waste hours and not find any domains.

Authority Website Income

This is Jon Haver's site and he has developed a great process to find expired domains that are highly relevant to any given niche.

The process is outlined in the epic post, The Ultimate Expired Domain Guide. The tools used are mentioned or even provided.

When you read the guide, it is pretty obvious that there is a steep and significant learning curve. It takes a long time even if you know that you are doing.

Jon's service removes all of the issues of finding an expired domain. I picked up a domain a couple weeks ago from AWI and the process was very easy.

I paid via paypal and Jon contacted me by email to ask about what niche the domain should be related to. That is one of the key aspects that separates the service by AWI from others – the expired domain will be in your specific niche and that adds a high level of relevance to your links. About one week later, I had the name of an available expired domain in my inbox.

I headed over to namecheap to register the domain and that was it.

The good:

- The time investment is minimal.
- You have no risk – there is a 100% money back guarantee.
- The domain should have great authority.
- The domain will be highly relevant to your niche.
- The service eliminates the need for you to review the backlinks and the Wayback Machine Archives.

The bad:

- It costs about \$75 for one domain (\$50/domain for larger orders), plus you have to register it. Please note that the cost is WAY cheaper than if you tried to buy a domain at an auction. This is the only drawback and it really is a bargain at this price.

Tips and Tricks

Here are a few things to keep in mind with Private Blog Networks.

IP Addresses and Hosting

Make sure the domains in your PBN have different IP addresses.

Why?

If domains are on the same IP address, there is a

chance that the same person owns the domains. To Google, this might indicate some level of collusion for backlinks.

The most important role of the IP addresses is to reduce the footprint of the network. Basically, you want to set up your IP addresses to minimize the possibility that Google (or anyone else) will discover your PBN .

Each of your domains on a PBN need to be on separate C Block IP Addresses.

What does that mean? IP addresses have 4 “blocks” – A, B, C, and D.

AAA.BBB.CCC.DDD

You want your PBN domains to have different numbers for the “CCC” set of the IP address. (Reference: This is a nice explanation about C Blocks by AJ Kohn.)

These IP addresses are on the same C Block and this is NOT good for a PBN:

50.18.**104**.27

50.18.**104**.180

50.18.**104**.219

These IP addresses are on different C Blocks and this is good for a PBN:

50.18.101.27

50.18.48.180

50.18.204.219

Why are separate C Block IP addresses important?

The IP address reveals a footprint or evidence of the network.

Imagine that someone is manually reviewing your money site and its backlink profile. It will be very easy to identify a PBN if there are 15 valuable links to your money site from 15 domains all on the same C Block.

That many links from one C Block is a little strange and not very likely naturally.

However, if you have 15 valuable links to your money from 15 domains on 14 different C Block IP Addresses that is far more believable and will not raise any red flags during a manual review.

Obtaining separate C Block IP addresses was the most challenging part of creating my own PBN and I still struggle with this issue.

There are SEO hosting services that happily provide separate C Block IP addresses. But guess what – those are not the best idea because most, if not all, of

the people with domains hosted with an SEO hosting company have PBN domains there.

That means that Google could detect a large number of questionable backlinks from a variety of domains all in sets of C Blocks, one of which may be yours. It may be unlikely, but Google does have the resources to figure out the network of an SEO hosting company.

What should you do for hosting?

Some legitimate, non-SEO hosting companies offer up reseller hosting accounts that allow you to use separate C Block IP addresses.

The best one that I've seen out there is [HostNine using the reseller account](#)<affiliate link>. Use the Level 1 Reseller account that allows up to 100 Resold Accounts (that's 100 separate cPanels) for under \$20 a month. HostNine works very well because they have several data centers in different locations. You need to set up reseller sub accounts and assign them to a location. Each domain will have its own sub account.

Another solution is to find small hosting companies that are cheap, like \$1-2 per month. A potential downside to using a small hosting company is having to install WordPress manually.

Yeah, that's right...some hosting companies do not have 1-click install for WordPress in 2014. I

recommend you do your homework on these smaller hosting companies before signing up.

The Content and Theme

The content needs to stand up on its own to a manual review. The content needs to be original and not published anywhere else. It is unlikely to have a manual review on your website by someone at Google but it is possible.

Ideally, the new content is well written and fits in with the previous topic of the website. The articles should look natural. That means it is probably good to have posts published over a period of time – don't publish all the articles on the same day. That's an easy fix in WordPress since you can edit the publish date.

Do not use the previous content from the site. You could technically see the content from the old webmaster on archive.org. However, respect the copyrights of the previous owner and create unique content. Copyright infringement is a whole different topic so I'll leave it at that.

I recommend 5 articles at a minimum for each domain. Again, the goal is to have a natural looking website that appears to be updated regularly. If you can get 10 articles posted, even better.

I like to use free, royalty free images from morguefile.com or find related youtube videos to post. If the video owner allows sharing the video then you can post it on your site since it links back to the youtube page.

There should be a unique "About" page that discusses the purpose of the website or an "About Me" page that discusses the publisher. Feel free to come up with an alter ego for each site.

Speaking of varied and normal – the themes should also be unique across your domains. I never use a paid theme and my method is to search for a theme in the WordPress theme dashboard.

It's best to find simple themes that allow the full text of posts to display on the home page. Stay away from complicated themes that have a bunch of options to set up – your time is better spent elsewhere. Keep the theme simple, clean, and free.

Outbound Links

Outbound links are the reason that you even started this PBN, so let's discuss them. You want to have links from an authoritative expired domain pointing to your money site.

However, you have to use the links judiciously and exercise caution throughout the process.

There should only be one article pointing to a money site. You don't want to have a domain with five articles that all point to your money site because it doesn't look natural.

If you are a gambler, then you could link from one more article, for a total of two articles linking to your money site.

There are diminishing returns on backlinks from one domain so it really isn't that advantageous to link from more than one article and could potentially expose your PBN.

Each of your articles should also have 2 – 3 other outbound links to authoritative, non-competitive web pages. This is really important, because these links provide context about the article and Google takes note that your money site is linked alongside authoritative web pages.

A few examples for the non-competitive outbound links would be wikipedia, New York Times, Washington Post, or NPR.

Other links on the page will also help the website look normal to a manual reviewer. I also occasionally link to a random blog related to the article's topic. Just make sure that the random blog is not a direct competitor to your site.

Conclusion

As you can see, a PBN, when set up properly, is a valuable tool for your niche site. Setting up a PBN takes time, money and effort, but the trade-off is it allows you to control the content and links to your niche site.

Advantages

- High Authority Backlinks to Your Money Site
- Control the Content Around Backlinks
- Control the Anchor Text of the Backlinks
- Can Alter the Content or Anchor Text at Anytime

Disadvantages

- Difficult To Find Expired Domains
- Must Host On Separate C Block IP Addresses
- Must Have Original, Unique Content
- Must Manage Several Other Websites
- Must Pay For More Hosting Accounts

Link Building with Private Blog Networks Summary

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Consider creating or joining a PBN to control content and links
- If you create a PBN, use expired domains related to your niche for link juice
- Check out both free and paid services to find expired domains
- Make sure the domains in your PBN have different IP addresses
- Publish unique content on the PBN that would stand up to a manual review
- Link to other, non-competing, authoritative websites (like news organizations)

Don't

- Have every article in your PBN point to your money site

Part 2: A Primer on Project Management

Targeted Project Management

Project management is a huge, vast discipline. You can use project management methodology to support nearly any kind of effort that requires work. For large-scale endeavors, incorporating some form of project management dramatically increases the likelihood of success.

Getting Organized

The number one area to improve upon for online entrepreneurs is getting organized.

What are my sources?

My experience in my professional life and “online” life conducting dozens of one-on-one coaching sessions with full time software project managers and online entrepreneurs revealed that organizing tasks is a common competency gap. Effective organizational skills positively impacts the full project life cycle and will also transfer over to activities in your daily life.

Task List

Getting organized, at a minimum, requires creating a task list. It will help far more than you think.

Start at a high level, and write down the broad tasks to complete; cover all aspects of your project from start to finish.

Once you have the high level list, go back and fill in the lower level tasks, or **subtasks**. Refine the list down as much as you can - I like to divide a high level task into subtasks that take 30 - 90 minutes to complete.

Why 30 - 90 minutes? That is the perfect amount of time for you to focus hard on a task and complete it in one sitting.

Spend about 30 minutes creating your task list:

- Don't worry about mistakes.
- Don't worry about documenting every detail or every task.
- Don't worry about making a perfect list

You will revisit your task list often. The task list is a living document that will grow and change with your project. You can make changes or add to the task list at any time. If you think of something later or want to add more detail, then don't hesitate to make changes.

Task Ownership

Who is responsible for each task? Each task needs to have an **owner**. If you are a one-person organization

like many of us are, then you probably own all of the tasks. If you have a team of resources, like a writer or link builder, then you can assign tasks to the appropriate person(s). Review each item in your task list and assign an owner.

Task Dependency

This is one of the most valuable exercises in getting organized, and it is often skipped or overlooked. You need to determine if there are any dependencies among tasks in the list.

A **dependency** is the relationship among tasks that determines the order that the tasks will be completed.

There are four types of dependencies, but we will only focus on two:

1. Finish to Start - One task must finish completely before another task can start. For example, you have to select a niche before you can start creating the content for the website. It is impossible to start writing articles and reviews before you even know your topic.
2. Start to Start - One task must start before the other task can start. For example, you have to start

keyword research before you can start competition analysis on the first Search Engine Results Page (SERP). You do not have to completely finish your keyword research before starting to analyze your competition.

Review each task and subtask on the list. Determine whether the task has a dependency on any other task. If there is a dependency, then note this relationship.

Task Duration and Dates

A list of tasks is a great first step, but now we need to indicate when things will be done. When you assign dates and durations, the list forms the schedule of the project (it is now a project plan instead of just a task list). Let's break this process down into a couple steps:

1. Review the list of tasks and write down the amount of time the task owner needs to complete each task. Project management methodology refers to this as the task duration. As I mentioned, I prefer the task durations in the sweet spot of 30 - 90 minutes, but some will take much longer. For example, writing a 2,000 word article will likely take several hours. Now you have the framework for the next step.
2. Start at the top of the task list and assign start and end dates for each task. Be sure to take into account

both the duration and dependencies.

Another approach to assigning start and end dates is to begin at the end. You might want the project to end by a specific date. Start at the end of the task list and fill in the target end date for the last task. Work your way backwards, taking both the duration and dependencies into account as you fill in the start and end dates for each task. You may find that you can't complete your project in time without adjusting the duration of tasks or moving the end date of the project out farther into the future.

Multiple Niche Sites at the Same Time

The ability to build and manage multiple successful niche website can create a new source of income. This is an especially critical skill if your goal is to replace your primary source of income.

Increase Your Earning Potential with Several Niche Sites

You limit your niche website income if you can only work on one niche website (one project) at a time. Your maximum earning potential is capped by the one, single website.

This is okay if you are only looking to supplement your income. However, if you wish to replace your income so you can quit your day job, then you need to create multiple sources of income.

Don't Scale Until You are Ready...

It is very dangerous to initiate several sites when you are first getting started with niche websites. You should focus on one website first to ensure you have a solid understanding of the processes and steps. If you have already tried to start several websites, that's okay.

Using the task list and project plan, you see the amount of intense work required early in the project. After the intense beginning the tasks take a shorter amount of time and they are more spread out as the project progress. Why does this matter?

You can work on a few niche websites at one time. It takes about two to three weeks to start a website if you can work on the site for 1 – 2 hours per day. Once you move beyond the initial starting tasks, you have downtime that you can use to research your next site. If you can outsource the content creation and link building, then you can start on other websites even sooner.

Risk Management for Niche Sites

Developing a proactive approach for managing risks increases the success of your projects. The end result is minimizing losses and maximizing gains. Using risk management methods allow you to address problems sooner and avoid reactionary responses.

Definition of Risk

Risk is the effect of uncertainty on objectives, whether positive or negative. Objectives can be time, cost, scope, or quality related effects.

One note here: a risk can be positive, also. We normally think about risks in a negative light, i.e. losing rankings due to a Google algorithm update or selecting a poor niche. Think of a positive risk as an opportunity.

Risks have one or more causes, and if the risk occurs there may be one or more impacts. For example, the completion of a niche site might be delayed due to a problem creating the content. The problem creating the content is the cause of the risk. The delay of the completion is the effect, if the risk occurs.

Case Studies

Let's discuss some specific examples to understand how to use structured risk management with your niche site.

Risk of Google Algorithm Updates

This may be the biggest risk that all niche site owners face: Google Algorithm Updates. The majority of the traffic that niche sites receive is from organic search traffic from Google. Algorithm updates can strike without warning - one day your site is ranking number one and the next day your site might be ranked down at 75. A change like that can cut your site off from the majority of your visitors.

Even niche sites with a clean, white hat backlink profile are at risk. You might assume that because you did not engage in any shady link building practices by using automated link building software (or other similar link building tactics) that you are in the clear. That simply is not true.

No one can control how Google updates the algorithm, so there is a risk associated with any niche site that is getting traffic from Google searches.

Risk of Poor Niche Selection

Let's imagine that you have carefully selected a niche for your web site after several weeks of brainstorming and keyword research. You purchased a domain, web hosting, wrote 1,000s of words worth of content, and you have started the link building process. There is a risk that the niche you selected is not a lucrative niche.

The niche might have good keyword search volume but the searchers and visitors might not be interested in making purchases, clicking ads, or participating in your selected monetization method. It just happens sometimes.

Risk Definitions and Terminology

Let's pause before we continue with our case studies to review definitions and terminology associated with risk management.

Risk Identification

Risk identification is the activity that documents the possible risks that could impact a project and the characteristics of the risks. Anyone on the project team can identify risks - for most of us with a team of one, we will do the bulk of the identifications. However,

knowledgeable people outside of the project team can provide valuable insight by identifying risks as well.

The main ways to identify risks are brainstorming, interviewing experts, and reviewing information by others that are more experienced (like blog articles).

Risk Analysis

Risk analysis includes methods that help you prioritize risks which help to improve the overall performance of the project. In addition, this step documents and describes the effects of the risk, which helps you make decisions in the presence of uncertainty.

For example, a risk with a high probability and a medium impact is a higher priority risk than a risk with a medium probability and a low impact. You should spend your time and efforts on the risks that have the highest combination of probability and impact.

Risk Response Planning

Risk Response Planning involves developing options and actions to enhance positive risks and reduce the impact of negative risks. There are four main techniques to deal with risks:

(Note: The example is referencing the Google algorithm update that penalizes web pages that have over optimized, or over used, the keywords in the anchor text of the backlinks to a web page.)

1. Avoid the risk: The goal of risk avoidance is to prevent the risk or the impact of the risk from happening. Sometimes, you can avoid a risk by a change in the approach, obtaining additional information, or gaining experience. Example: Avoid the risk of over optimization of keywords by not using keywords at all.
2. Transfer the risk: The goal of risk transference is to move the responsibility of the negative impact and the response to another party. Example: Transfer the risk of over optimization of keywords to a link building service. The responsibility of the response (if the risk occurs) is transferred and part of the negative impact is transferred.
3. Mitigate the risk: The goal of risk mitigation is to reduce the probability and/or the impact of the risk to a reasonable threshold. In the majority of cases, it is more effective to prevent a risk from occurring than it is to repair the impact of a negative risk. Sometimes, it is not possible to prevent a risk from occurring so the best course is to reduce the negative impact. Example: Mitigate the risk of over optimization of

keywords by using keywords very sparingly.

4. Accept the risk: Risk acceptance is used for cases that the level of probability the risk occurs is low, the impact of the risk should it occur is insignificant, or a suitable response to the risk has not been identified. Example: Accept the risk of over optimization of keywords by using keywords without any concern for over optimization penalties.

Risk Monitoring and Control

From the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), risk monitoring and control involves the identifying, analyzing, and planning for newly arising risks, keeping track of the identified risks, reanalyzing existing risks, and reviewing the execution of risk responses while evaluating the effectiveness of the responses.

You should review risks on a regular interval and document any changes. In most cases weekly reviews are appropriate. If a risk has a high probability or if the impact is great, then you may want to assess the risk more frequently.

Risks may arise anytime in the project life cycle so it is important to identify new risks. Use the same methods of brainstorming and interviewing to find new

risks through the project. Again, weekly sessions are appropriate to identify new risks.

Execute any corrective actions for negative risks as planned, dependent on the priority of the risk. A risk with a high probability and a high impact requires swift, decisive action to address the risk. A risk with a low probability will not require the same level of urgency.

Case Studies: Revisited

Let's review the examples listed above and apply the Project Risk Management Ideas.

Risk of Google Algorithm Updates

Risk Identification

Google Algorithm updates could negatively impact the search engine rankings.

The risk impact if the risk occurs would be a reduction in traffic to the website, plus a reduction in revenue.

Some examples of risk response planning are:

1. Avoid the risk by obtaining the majority of the website visitors from sources other than organic search engine traffic. Risk avoidance is not a viable option if you plan on attracting free traffic from Google. You could use Facebook to attract your traffic. You would need to develop a following on Facebook. Most likely, you would need to purchase

ads to get visitors to your site.

2. Mitigate the risk from occurring by using only white hat backlinking techniques. Do not engage in any gray hat link building. If you already have gray hat based links, then you would need to remove or disavow the links in the Google Webmaster Tools.
3. Mitigate the impact of the risk by obtaining traffic from social media (Facebook, Twitter, Pintrest, etc...). If you have traffic from multiple sources, the impact will not be as great if you fall in google rankings.
4. Transfer part of the responsibility of the risk by hiring an SEO firm to handle your backlinking. Research link building services to handle some portion of your backlinking. Then, you can hire a high quality company.
5. Accept the risk and impact by using gray hat backlinking techniques to build the ranking. You should have plans in place, ready to execute if the risk occurs. It would be worthwhile to have a list of the links to your webpage so that you could use the Google Webmaster Disavow tool. Another option would be hiring a link building service to improve your backlinking profile. If the risk actually occurs, then you could start the corrective action plan to improve the situation. No immediate action is

needed, but you should determine the trigger that will initiate the corrective action plan.

Risk of Poor Niche Selection

Risk Identification

The selected niche might not be profitable despite having an acceptable amount of search engine traffic.

The risk impact might be that revenue does not meet the income expectations even though there is traffic coming to the website.

Some examples of risk response planning are:

1. Avoid the risk by inquiring with webmasters that are already in the market. This would be difficult since the webmasters would be your future competitors - you still might be able to get some information from webmasters. You might inquire about investing or buying the website to get some insight on the traffic and revenue. If you cannot locate any webmasters in the market already, then this avoidance approach might be impossible.
2. Mitigate the risk by researching the niche further. You could analyze the market to ensure that others are making money in the niche. Take a good look at the top 100 Google search results for your main keywords. Look for other niche sites. If you see

other niche sites, particularly in the top 40 results, that is a very good sign that many other people have determined that the niche is worth spending time and money on.

3. Mitigate the impact of the risk by seeking other sources of revenue for the niche. You might be able to get 3rd parties to buy advertising space on your site. This would take some effort but it would diversify the monetization methods.
4. Transfer part of the responsibility of the risk by finding a partner. This tactic may not be highly effective - if you're spending time on a project, you should probably conduct your due diligence to make sure your efforts are worthwhile.
5. Accept the risk by creating the website as planned. No immediate action is needed since you will be proceeding with developing and creating the website. However, think of ways to pivot, or change directions, if your initial monetization method fails to be profitable.

Case Study Summary

You should notice that several of the solutions for dealing with a risk are similar. The solutions for risk response planning will most likely use a combination of the avoidance, mitigation, or transference methods.

- Preventing or reducing the impact of a risk is more effective than correcting a risk after it occurs. Remember the phrase “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”
- Be proactive dealing with risks and try to think a few steps ahead
- Careful analysis and planning in every phase of the project will naturally minimize your risks overall

Conclusion

Taking Action

Creating a niche website is hard - it takes time and discipline. The overall project really is hard to complete. However, none of the individual steps are hard and almost all of them only take a few hours.

The challenging aspect is that you have to put together all of the related tasks over a period of time. If you focus, you should be able to have your site running with sufficient content to attract traffic in 60 days. The time it will take for you to rank on the first page in google depends on the competitiveness of your keywords and could be several more months.

Start today by writing out your goal.

Get it on paper or in a written form.

Prioritizing Tasks

With the process chart, it is very clear which tasks are critical along each step of the way.

Each day, take status - what are you goals for the day?

Work to complete those goals and if something is not completed as planned, analyze why it wasn't, and correct the issue.

Tough times in the first 45 days

The first three weeks move fast as you are researching, iterating, setting up hosting, learning about your topic, writing, and writing some more. Overall it's kind of fun, right?

You may even see your site move up in the ranks quickly. The project becomes less fun when your site just sits there on page 4 with no traffic.

This is when you can make or break your website. This is when people give up because they are not getting much feedback in the form of revenue or even visitors.

You need to persevere.

You need to be focused.

You need to keep adding content and creating links.

If you keep to this plan for the first 45 days, you will see results. If not, this is when you assess the situation and figure out the issue. If you have sufficient content and your website has been published and indexed for at least four weeks, you might need some more links. You may need to go back to keyword research and evaluate the competition again.

Are you not sure if your site is going to work? Do you need some other eyes to check out your site or just another opinion?

If so, ask questions in the private Google community.

Or, you can [email me directly](#).

Staying Focused

You must stay focused on your tasks to achieve your goal.

Creating a profitable niche site is not easy. It requires a breadth of skills to complete a long list of tasks. However, none of the tasks are very hard or even that time consuming.

Filter out the noise and distractions. Fight the urge to consume too much information. There is plenty of information out there that can distract or confuse you.

The best way to ensure you accomplish your goals is to focus on one task at a time.

Ways to connect with me

Email

doug@nichesiteproject.com

Ask about Private Coaching



Resources

Hosting

[BlueHost](#)

[Host Nine](#)

Tools

[Long Tail Pro](#) – **\$20 OFF** Keyword Research & Rank Checking

[EasyAzon](#) – Adding Amazon Affiliate Links

Backlink Information

[MOZ](#)

[Majestic SEO](#)

[ahrefs](#)

Backlink Services or Courses

[The HOTH](#) – This is how I build basic backlinks for my sites.

[The Ultimate PBN Course](#) - A course I developed with Lewis Ogden of Cloud Income. [Click here for an exclusive offer.](#)

Glossary

AdSense - Google's contextual advertising network. Advertisers may publish relevant advertisements on websites near content and share the profits from those ad clicks with Google.

Affiliate - A commercial entity with a relationship with larger entity. For our purposes, if you join the Amazon Associate program you are considered an affiliate of Amazon.

Amazon - An international e-commerce company that sells a wide variety of products online.

Amazon Associate - An affiliate program that allows you to earn a percentage of sales of books or other Amazon products; Includes the ability to link to specific books, categories, or keywords.

Anchor Text - The text that a user would click on to follow a link.

Article Directory - A website with collections of articles written about different subjects. Article directories generally accept content from any contributor provided the content is unique.

Backlink - Link pointing to your website from another website.

Blog - A periodically updated journal that provides

information and allows user interaction (usually in the form of comments). Most blogs tend to be personal in nature.

Click Through Rate (CTR) - The percentage of people who click on an advertisement they viewed, which is a way to measure how relevance of a traffic source or keyword. A higher CTR is better.

Conversion - Reaching your desired goal. Examples of conversion rates are 1) the % of visitors to your site that click over to Amazon and 2) the number of visitors to Amazon (from your site) that purchase a product.

Dependency - Is the relationships among tasks which determine the order in which activities need to be performed.

Domain - Your website's own unique web address.

Domain Authority - A prediction for how a website will perform in search engine rankings. Use Domain Authority when comparing one site to another or tracking the "strength" of your website over time. The range of domain authority is 0 - 100, with a higher number being better.

Forum Posts - A web forum is an online message board where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. These sites are usually dedicated to a specific topic.

Hosting - The activity or business of providing storage space and access for websites.

Keyword - A word or phrase that users will enter into search engines.

Primary Keyword - The main keyword(s) that will attract visitors to your site.

Secondary Keyword - Additional keyword(s) related to your primary keyword that will attract visitors to your site.

Long Tail - More precise and specific keywords related your primary keyword. They will not have as many search results, but have value because they are highly targeted.

Density - How often keywords appear on a webpage. This used to affect search engine relevancy based on how prominent keywords appeared within the content of a page.

Meta Description - Provides a concise explanation of the content of web pages. Meta descriptions are used in search engine result to display preview snippets.

Money Site - Your website that attracts visitors who purchase products on Amazon.

Outsourcing - Contracting out of a business process to a third-party. Outsourcing can speed up your timeline,

but it also involves additional costs and resource management.

Page Authority - Calculated metric for how well a given webpage is likely to rank in search engine results. The range of page authority is 0 - 100, with a higher number being better.

Podcast - A multimedia digital file made available on the Internet for downloading to a portable media player or computer. Many podcasts are made available for free, though some must be purchased.

Scope - Defines what is included in your project and what is NOT included.

Search Engine Results Page (SERP) - Is the page on which the search engines show the results for a search query. The first SERP shows the top 10 results.

Social Profiles - Information about you for social networking. An active social profile will help your rankings in search engine results.

Spammy Links - Links between pages that are present for reasons other than merit - for example, only to manipulate page rankings.

Theme - A template that determines the visual layout of your website.

Tracking ID - A code unique to your website that allows Amazon to track purchases.

URL - Stands for Uniform Resource Locator. It is the specific text string you enter to locate a web page.

Web 2.0 blogs - The term used to describe a variety of web sites (blogs specifically) and applications that allow anyone to create and share online information or material.

Web Directory - Lists websites by category and subcategory. Web directories often allow site owners to submit their site for inclusion.

WordPress - A free and open source blogging tool and a content-management system based on which runs on a web hosting service.

