



THE LINK BUILDING GLOSSARY

A-Z GUIDE

Link Building

Link building is the process of acquiring hyperlinks from other websites to your own.



AC Rank [A Citation Rank]

Majestic SEO's measure of a page's importance, on a scale of 0 to 15. It can be considered an alternative to Google's PageRank and is used in various link tool programs. The AC Rank stands for A Citation Rank.

The Actual PageRank

Google's value for your page, and it's not what you see on a tool or your toolbar, as that isn't updated frequently enough to reflect the true value.

Anchor Text

The content inside of the anchor element (`< a>anchor text < /a>`) and is designed to give you an idea of what the content you are pointing to is about. The anchor element contains an href attribute where the target of the link is designated. The anchor element is, many times, called an anchor tag.

Algorithm Updates

We are almost always referring to Google when we speak of algorithm updates. For a list of major updates see History of Google Algorithm Updates. Basically, this just means that something has changed in the way Google looks at sites.

Alt Tags/Attributes

Alt is an attribute (described below) that should be used to describe an image. Screen readers use alt attributes to describe an image to a visually-impaired user.

Attributes

To summarize, attributes describe more about a particular HTML element. As mentioned just above, alt is an attribute for an image link.



Backlink Profile

A term used to describe the links coming into a site from sources other than the site itself.

Bait [link bait]

Content that is specifically designed in order to naturally attract links.

Bing

The most popular alternative to Google's search engine at the current time, owned by Microsoft.

Bots

Also called robots/crawlers/spiders, bots retrieve information from websites.

Blekkio

Also a great alternative to Google and prides itself on being a spamfree search engine. It has some great features that can help you when link building.

Blog Networks

Exactly what they sound like: networked blogs. Their importance in link building has recently been compromised as several high-profile and large networks (e.g., BuildMyRank) have been devalued.

Brand Mentions

If your brand is mentioned within content without a link, whether it's on a website or in social media, this is a brand mention.

Broken Links

A broken link is one that points to a nonexistent resource.



Content

The subject matter, in text and images, of your site and its pages. Content is also used to describe anything that your brand produces, whether it's a guest post on another site, an article that you distribute, a press release, or an infographic.

Conversion

A term used to describe an event where a user performs a certain action that is valuable to you as a site owner. Some webmasters view a contact email as a conversion, for example, while others simply view an actual sale as one.

CTR [click-through rate]

A term associated with PPC but becoming more popular in the general SEO vernacular as some speculate that it may become more important in ranking. Your CTR is the number of times your listing is clicked upon (clicks) divided by the number of times it's shown (triggered by a search and referred to as impressions with PPC), calculated as a percentage.

Canonicals

A canonical element tells a search engine which page is the desired one to use as the original source in order to prevent duplicate content.

Citation Flow

This is a trademark Majestic metric that measures the link equity of a website.

Citations

These are mentions of your business's info like name and phone number. They are not usually linked and can help search engines to better trust a business.

Class C

People call this a C class network or block also and it refers to IP addresses. [Click here](#) if you need a more technical definition.

Cleanup

This refers to cleaning up potentially bad/spammy links usually, but it can refer to tidying up any other issues related to a site.

Co-citation

This is a semantic measurement of the relationship between multiple items.

Competitive Analysis

This refers to looking at one site in relation to its competitors. Link builders sometimes use competitive analysis in order to identify links that other sites have but their site does not, giving them a list of links to pursue.

Content Marketing

Often viewed as a nicer way of saying that you're building links, content marketing is the practice of creating content that can naturally attract links after it's been shared.

Crawlability

This refers to how well search engine spiders can get through and follow links on your website.

Conversion Rates

This is the percentage of users/visitors who complete a specific goal. That goal can be submitting a contact us form, downloading an ebook, buying a product, etc.



Deep Link Ratio

The percentage of links that go to your subpages vs. just your home page. Many different views abound about what number is ideal.

Deindexed

Refers to being thrown out of a search engine and removed from their database.

Disavow

When you disavow a link, you're telling Google that you don't want the link credited to your site. You can send disavow lists straight to Google.

Disclaimer

A disclaimer can be used for various purposes but in link building terms it is a notice saying that links on a page have been purchased or that the article is sponsored.

Dofollowed Links

Links are automatically followed unless a nofollow attribute is added (and possibly unless your WordPress plugins override everything to be nofollowed) and there is technically no such thing as a dofollowed link. There is no dofollow tag but people use this term a lot to simply mean a followed link.

Domain Authority

Domain Authority is a metric created by Moz to predict how well a site will rank.

Domain Rating

This is an Ahrefs metric designed to indicate the strength of a site's link profile.

Duplicate Content

Duplicate content can occur due to many reasons but it's thought to be a poor signal to Google so it's undesirable. Canonical tags are used to help a search engine bot to understand where the original page is.

Directories

One of the most consistent ways that people have built links throughout the years. There are paid and free versions, directories that accept all submissions and many that are quite picky about what they'll accept, and while they have fallen out of fashion somewhat recently, they are still a valid source of traffic.

Disavow Links Tool

Use this to tell Google or Bing which links you want them to ignore in your backlink profile. This tool came about after an outcry from webmasters who were punished for incoming links that hurt them but that they could not control.

Drain Rank

This refers to the idea that linking out to other sites drains your PageRank.



Equity

The group of links pointing to your site at a point in time.

Editorial Links

If someone gives you a link without you requesting it in some way, that's an editorial link.

Evergreen Content

Content that doesn't become outdated easily is considered to be evergreen content.

External Links

Links that go from your site to someone else's site. Some people nofollow them in order to prevent them from receiving any link juice.



Followed Links

Links are naturally followed unless they have a rel="nofollow" attribute on them in the code. The term "followed" is used to tell search engines to "credit" the links towards the sites they point to so they will help the sites rank higher.

Footer Links

These are the links in a site's footer. They used to be heavily spammed but that is not seen as often these days.

404s

The 404 HTTP response code signals a page that is not found.

Footprints

Ways of identifying patterns that you're using to build links. For example, if 75 percent of your links come from non-U.S.-hosted sites and are all on blogrolls, that's a big footprint. A "natural" backlink profile should not have many obvious footprints due to its organic nature, therefore having easily identifiable footprints is a potential bad sign for your site. However, you can have a good footprint too (such as if you had a lot of great and authoritative links from respected news sources because your site was constantly being cited there.)



Google

So powerful, it's now a verb. No matter what anyone says, almost all of us market to what Google wants.

Google Analytics

A free website analytics program that gives you all sorts of information about your site.

Google Search Console

Another free program from Google, formerly called Webmaster Tools. Search Console also gives you information about your site and can be connected to Analytics. There are various reports that can be run to help you get more information about how your site is performing in the SERPs.

Guest Posting

A popular way of building links and creating new content. Many sites actively recruit for new guest posters and some are amenable to the idea when contacted. The whole idea of a guest post is to raise exposure for a brand on another site, but it's quickly becoming a spammy and abused method. However, when done correctly, guest posts can bring you some fantastic traffic.

Google Webmaster Guidelines

Found here, Google Webmaster Guidelines are subject to alteration. Your site can be penalized or deindexed for violations of their guidelines.



href

This is an attribute of the anchor tag for links. It contains the URL and the anchor text.

Hashtags

Widely used on social network platforms in order to associate a tweet/comment with something. They begin with #. On Twitter, hashtags are used to help trend certain ideas. For link building purposes, hashtag searches on Twitter are useful for finding good potential link targets.

Hidden Link

A link that is intentionally coded in order to not appear as a link. It can be hidden using a text color that is the same as the background, placed inside an irrelevant image, font size 0, etc. These are viewed as manipulative and deceptive and can cause Google to remove your site from their index.



Image Link

An image that is linked to a target. Image links are part of a natural link profile and can pass link juice, but they do not include anchor text as regular text links do. Instead, they use an alt text (which is also used by screenreaders) to give information about the link target.

Inbound Links

Links pointing to your site from another site are called inbound links.

Indexation

This refers to how a search engine has crawled and cataloged a site.

Infographics

Containing both images and text in one single format, infographics are a common form of content.

Internal Links

These are links to other pages on your site. Your internal links are critical for navigation and crawlability.

IP Addresses

An IP address is a series of numbers identifying a computer.



Juice

A term used to describe the benefit received from a link, also referred to as link juice.



Keywords

Words or phrases for which you want to rank in the search engines. They should be present in your copy and in links pointing to your site.



Link Profile

The collective group of sites that link to you.

Landing Pages

These are the pages that a user hits when they first visit your site from any avenue.

Link Exchange

Once a common form of link building, a link exchange is when site A links to site B in return for B linking back to A.

Linking Domains

This is the number of unique domains linking to a site. It is different from the gross number of links.

Link Reclamation

Link reclamation is a process of adding links to your site from broken links or unlinked mentions

Link Schemes

Google gives you a list of violations to its guidelines, including an array of practices that they consider to be link schemes.



MozRank

A method of measuring the link popularity of a webpage by SEO software provider Moz. Becoming a more important metric by the day, almost akin to PageRank.

Manual Penalty

Google will notify you of a manual penalty through Search Console. A manual penalty (officially called a manual action by Google) is different from an algorithmic issue. With a manual penalty you have the chance to fix the issues and send in a reconsideration request to Google.

Mobile-First Indexing

This is the new way Google indexes a site. They crawl and index the mobile version first. If you only have a desktop version, that's what will be indexed.



Nofollowed Link

These are indicated by placing a rel="nofollow" into the link code. A nofollow is designed to tell Google that the link should not pass value to the target. Nofollows are also used internally for PageRank sculpting and to indicate that a link is sponsored/paid. Nofollow links are not good for ranking purposes but they can be good for traffic.

Noise Anchors

These are keywords such as "click here" "website" etc.



Outbound Linking

The practice of linking from your site to another. Many people nofollow these links in an effort to conserve link juice, but that practice is becoming a bit more frowned upon recently.

Open Rates

This is the percentage of people who receive an email and open it.

Off Page

Link building is an off page SEO practice as it does not require working directly with the website.

On Page

On page SEO is comprised on anything done on the site in order to improve its position in the SERPs.

Outreach

Outreach is the practice of contacting sites that you'd like to link to your site, whether by email, the phone, or social media.



PageRank

Google's measure of a page's importance. There's a difference in what you can see as your PageRank and what Google thinks it is.

Paid Links

Refers to links that are bought and placed on a website, with the intention of helping the buyer's website rank better. When not indicated as such, are a violation of Google's guidelines and are a risky tactic. Paid links can be problematic both for the site selling them and for the webmaster buying them as both practices can get you penalized. If a link has been purchased, it should be indicated as such with a nofollow according to Google.

Page Authority

Page Authority is a metric created by Moz to predict how well a page will rank.

Page Not Found

Also called a 404 error, this is a page that no longer exists where it once did.

Panda

A Google algorithm update that can make grown men cry. It first struck fear into our hearts in February 2011 and was an effort to force higher quality sites higher up in the SERPs. After the first update, we've seen several more. There's way, way too much to go into here but you can read all the SEW articles about it here.

Paid Links

A violation of Google's guidelines, a paid link is one that has gone live in exchange for money.

Position Tracking

The practice of tracking where you rank for various keywords across a period of time.

PBNs

Private blog networks (PBNs) are networks of sites.

Penguin

A new search algorithm designed to detect, and boot out, spam. Like Panda, it made us cry and several sites were “accidentally” affected by it, so badly that there’s actually a form to fill out if you think you’re one of those accidental cases.



Query

Simply a question that you ask a search engine or a database, whether or not it’s in the form of a question. We refer to queries in terms of how many times someone searches for a keyphrase, and in manners related to seeing where you rank in an engine.



Rank

Where you show up on the SERPs.

Reciprocal Linking

The process of linking to someone who links to you. It’s a common way of requesting a link (i.e., I’ll link to you if you will link to me).

Referrer

In link terms, a referrer is something that sent a visitor to your site. That could be a search engine or a link from a website. It’s the previous place a user was before they hit your site.

Rel

An element that gives the role of a link. Current uses critical for link building are to say whether a link should be followed (the default) or nofollowed (rel=nofollow).

Robots

Search engine bots, but robots can be slang for the robots.txt file, which gives instructions to engines about what to do with your site. If you don't want certain pages to be indexed, you block them in the robots file. There are also meta robots tags (< META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, NOFOLLOW">) A robots.txt file is also found at url.com/robots.txt.

Rot

A term used to describe what happens when there are links pointing to pages that are no longer available and not properly redirected or handled.

Reconsideration Request

If you have been hit by a manual action or affected by security issues, once you fix the problem you submit a reconsideration request to Google.

Redirects

Redirects send a site or page elsewhere.

Referring Domains

In your link profile you may have 15000 links but only 5000 referring domains due to having multiple links coming from the same site.

Resource Pages

Pages that mostly list resources and links.



SERPs [search engine results pages]

The pages Google, Bing, and others show you after you've performed a search.

Sitewide Links

Links that are on every page of a site. You commonly see them in sidebars and footers, and while they once were a pretty easy way to get good rankings quickly, they're no longer viewed so positively. You do tend to find them in almost any backlink profile though, as they are part of a natural profile.

Spam

Jokingly referred to as being "sites positioned above mine", but is defined as being anything that clutters the web and makes for a poor user experience. Spam links are considered to be links that are irrelevant and low-quality but pursued simply to improve rankings.

Sitemaps

A sitemap tells a search engine how to get to all of your pages that you want crawled.

Sitewide Links

These are links on every page of a site, such as in the footer or blogroll.

Source Code

The actual code of a page that can be viewed in a browser. Not all code is viewable in this way.

Spiders

Search engine crawlers.

Sponsored Posts

If money is exchanged in order to publish a post, it's a sponsored post. Most sponsored posts contain disclaimers but not all do.

Social Signals

Signs that your site/post/article is doing well socially, on the main social network platforms. Social signals are thought to be an everincreasing method of measuring importance in the search engines and may become a bigger part of algorithms.



Twitter

A social media platform where users communicate through 140 characters or less. It's becoming more and more useful for finding good information as it happens.

Targets

A target is the page you want a link to lead someone to.

Templates

Many link outreach specialists use templates (that can be modified) for outreach. A template is simply an outline for something that is often used.

Toxic Links

These are links that are thought to potentially harm your site.

Toolbar PageRank [TBPR]

The number from 0 to 10 that you can see that reflects the most recently updated idea of how important your site is to Google. It is not Google's true value of your site.

Traffic

The amount of visitors to a page or site.

Trust Flow

This is a trademark Majestic metric that measures the categorization of a website.



Underline

To signify most links, the linked keywords will be underlined. Links are commonly coded with underlining; style manipulations that do not underline a link can be considered to be a hidden link.

Unlinked Mentions

This is when your brand is mentioned in content with no link to your site.

Unnatural Link Warnings

Like lice, nobody wants to see them. They are messages received in Google's Webmaster Tools that indicate that some potentially unnatural links have been detected for your site.

URL [Uniform Resource Locator]

URLs have several elements that are important for SEO purposes. The domain name can give clues about the theme of your site and your brand and should be chosen carefully, as overly-optimized domain names were supposedly downgraded in the EMD update. File names should also be named carefully so that your URLs are SEO-friendly.

URL Rating

Another Ahrefs metric, the URL rating measures the strength of a target's backlink profile.



Velocity

Your link growth speed. It can be measured with Link Research Tools.



Webmaster Tools

Top search engines Google and Bing offer a free platform that you can use to keep an eye on your site. It can be a first line of defense when you notice any negative changes with rankings and traffic.

Wayback Machine

Using the Wayback Machine you can view a site's archived pages from various dates.

Widget

Widgets are bits of code embedded on a page, usually designed to provide links back to page.



Xenu's Link Sleuth

One of those old-school things that anyone who's been involved in SEO for more than a few years probably loves. Xenu's Link Sleuth identifies broken links on sites.

XML Sitemap

This is used to tell search engines about all of your pages and where they can be found. XML is a markup language.



Yahoo

The other search engine. Many link builders will refer to being listed in the Yahoo Directory, which used to be one of those things that we all recommended. Today, Bing provides the search results you see on Yahoo.

Yandex

Yandex is a Russian search engine.



Zzzzz

Sleep, which you definitely need if you're going to link build. It's tiring work!



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