



Link Building Clinic Week 1: Concepts & Hard Facts

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SEO **Research** Labs

Keyword Analysis & Link Targeting

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Topics For Today

- It's Scary Out There
- Types of Links
- Link Analysis Concepts
- PageRank & Friends
- Trust, Authority, Community
- The Weakest Links & Stupid Linking Tricks
- Linking Strategy Keys



SEO Boils Down To...

- Optimized Pages – **Content**
- Internal Link Text & **Structure**
- External Link Text – **Reputation**
- **Authority** – External Links (& other factors?)
- Avoiding Gotchas (duplicate content)
- **Creativity**
- **Planning**
- **Process**



It's Getting Scary

- Search engines know the game
- Research is catching up
- Florida was a warning shot (November 2003)
- Jagger was a dagger (Fall 2005)
- More to come in link analysis
- More to come in link filtering
- Do you want to be in front of the bus, or on it?
- The good news? It's not all about penalties



Who's Your (Big) Daddy?

- Google's "Big Daddy" Data Center
 - new network/infrastructure, new servers, new crawlers
 - The big changes are not in the ranking algorithm – that's pretty well baked
 - Big changes in crawling and indexing
 - Of particular interest to us? INDEXING.
 - Pages get filtered, the shape of the web (ATG) changes
 - Rankings can move around a lot when the contents of the index change a lot. Why? Because links change!
 - Changes are usually less about the site that moved, more about the sources of links for you and your competition
 - Supplemental pages – do the links count?



9 Types of Links

- Natural Links of Pure Love
- Natural Links of Pure Hate
- Contextual Links
- Bartered Links
- Link Exchanges
- Paid Links
- Manufactured Links
- Automated Links
- Stolen Links



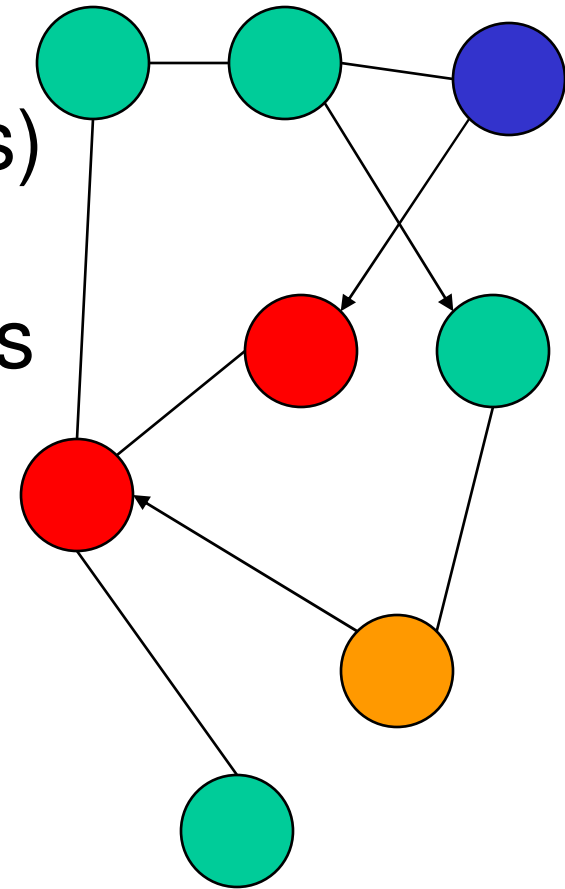
Link Analysis Concepts

- Web Graphs & Graph Theory – Nodes, Edges
- Cliques, Union Sets, & Tracking Spam
- The Shape Of The Web
- What Search Engines Want vs. What They Can Actually Do
- How Search Engines Can Profile Websites



Web Graphs & Graph Theory

- Connect The Dots (vertices / nodes) with edges (links)
- Web can be seen at different scales
- So, what's a node? It depends.
- Web pages (PageRank)
- Web Sites (domains, hosts)
- Any arbitrary grouping is possible
- One Way or Two Way?



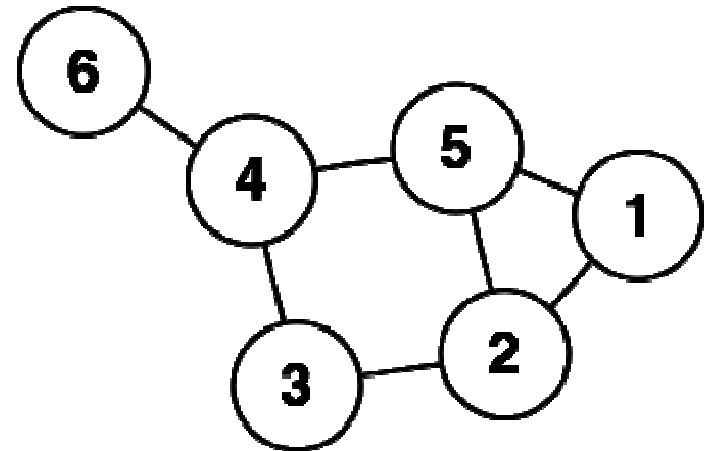
Technically...

- “Vertices” are connected by “edges”
- On the web, edges are **directional** (may be one way or two way)
- The web graph is a **directed graph**
- A directed graph with weighted edges is called a **network**
- So, if you hear a search engine geek talking about networks and cliques...



Cliques

- A clique is just a set of vertices in the graph that are connected
- Link exchange (2,3) creates a clique
- 3-way links (1, 2, 5) create a clique
- Seeing your web site as a node, how many cliques is it in?
- Does 1-way or 2-way matter?



The Shape of The Web

- The web is massively interconnected, so the graph is extremely complex
- PageRank looks at every page and every link
- To do better, search engines must look at web sites, web hosts, and connected/affiliated networks
- Search engines are seeking an idealized web graph – adjusting the weight of links/edges, removing nodes/vertices and links/edges



What Search Engines Want

- Links that really matter are relevant
- Links that really matter are “votes”
- Not every voter is equally informed
- More weight on “better” links
- Less weight on “lesser” links
- Some links to disappear
- Why? Because links are manipulated to distort the “natural” search results



What Search Engines Can Do

- Identify 2-way and 3-way links (cliques)
- Adjust the weight of those links (or remove them)
- Weights can depend on the type of link, the source, the target, the age of the link, or any combination of things
- Search engines can spot most paid links, and cut them from the graph
- Search engines can run queries that you can't!
- Google is known to filter by source – remove a website's ability to pass reputation and PageRank (authority) through outbound links



Profiling Web Sites

- Age of site, domain ownership & history
- IP address, address history
- Web Graph – Y! Site Explorer
- Trust / Authority & User Acceptance
- Topic & Type (commercial / informational)
- “Default” link weight – if 90% of your links are low weight, new links & internal links could be treated the same



Finding Paid Links & Networks

- Start with a manually seeded set of sites that sell “text links” (known sellers) – **yes, they can**
- Extract the paid links (known buyers) – **yes, they can**
 - Target URL & domain
 - Anchor text
- Search for sites that link to the known buyers with the same anchor text to find more sellers - **yes they can**
- A 20-minute demo of a MANUAL process yielded hundreds of sellers, thousands of buyers
- This can all be automated, maybe it’s already happened
- Being a known buyer may not be so bad w/ Google



PageRank:

$$PR(A) = (1-d) + d (PR(T1)/C(T1) + \dots + PR(Tn)/C(Tn))$$

- Start at a random web page
- Wander through the web by following random links
- 15% chance of giving up on any page ($d = .85$)
- The number of links on a page reduces the chance that one will be clicked
- PageRank is the probability that a random surfer will find the page
- How many clicks are your pages away from the web?
- Deep sites – flatten or use deep links
- PageRank Isn't Dead – but it's probably been modified



PageRank & Friends

- Larry Page's Wandering Drunk Is Not Dead
- Topic Sensitive PageRank & Site Flavor: Surfing For A Reason
- Yahoo's "Intent:" Surfer's Mindset, Commercial vs. Informational
- Spam Mass – may be a naïve concept, but...
- Hilltop, HITS, Teoma & Wisenut
- Seeded vs. Unseeded Algorithms
- TrustRank – working the graph backwards



Trust, Authority & Community

- Traffic & User Acceptance
- Topical Authority (TSPR)
- Defining Hubs & Authorities
 - Authority is a website to which many others link
 - Hub is a website which links to many others
 - A strong hub links to many authorities
 - A strong authority has links from many hubs
- Communities (Teoma / Ask)
- Tagging (Y! Buys Deli.ico.us)



The Weakest Links

- Link Farms
- Link Spam
- Web Spam
- Paid Links
- Run of Site
- What works today, may fail tomorrow



Stupid Linking Tricks

- Automated Link Exchanges
- Identical Anchor Text
- Unnatural Placement – ROS, Bottom Shelf By The Viagra
- Link Whores & Link Pimps
- Using Email Spam To Achieve Link Spam
- Bait & Switch Tricks
- When It's Not A Penalty, When It Is



Lame Excuses

- It's good for visitors
- It's relevant
- It's topical
- Everybody does it
- I have to spam to compete
- I have to spam to survive
- I saw it on a forum...



Keys To Long Term Success

- Quality Over Quantity
- Long Term, One Way Links
- Presence Builds Presence
- Authority & Trust Pay Off - Massively
- Follow-Up Pays Off
- S*** Happens, But Good Links Happen For A Reason
- You Can't Polish A Turd
- Bondo and Duct Tape Don't Last
- Forget About PageRank!



The Big Idea

- Leveraging Natural Assets
- Creating Link Targets
- Profitable Promotions
- Links That Pay YOU
- Making your site perform better pays off – massively
- It's easier to double conversion than to double traffic – and it pays off massively



If you have some time...

- Watch the keyword strategy video (week 3 from Advanced SEO, aka our free download)
 - Our linking strategy depends on our keyword strategy!
 - Next week, we'll talk about SEO process
 - So, watch the process video too if you have even more time
 - Or go have a cup of coffee and “relax”



Q & A

- Next Week – Planning, Budgeting, Process
- Take Off Your Hats: White, Gray, Black



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