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Black Hat Affiliate Marketing – Legal? Yes. Ethical? Hmmm...

By Jambhala Rinpo

There seem to be numerous methods that affiliate marketers use to earn their commissions these

days. Adding affiliate links to websites, emails, instant messengers, articles, e-books, pay-per-click ads, banners, and any other form of media are all popular affiliate marketing strategies. Success comes to them when people click those links, get tracked by a cookie uploaded to their computer and then make a purchase from the affiliate program's website. Then the affiliate gets a check in the mail for all the commissions earned.

Recently though, there have been some new affiliate marketing tactics that are creating a bit of a stir in the affiliate marketing communities. It seems that an elite group of marketers are using some questionable methods to increase their commissions that have been labeled as "black hat" affiliate marketing tactics. So who are these elite, and what are their black hat tactics?

The elite group of black hatters is headed by a sly programmer named John Reel. He's created a program that cloaks affiliate links like no other link cloaker you've ever seen before. That's right; this one does a few things differently.

– One of the black hat features is that it will create framed links. This means that the link you see in the address bar will not be for the actual website you land on by clicking it. Also, the title bar in your browser will say whatever message the black hatter affiliate wants you to see.

– Another one of the more powerful features of this black hat affiliate tool is the ability to embed affiliate cookies into your links. This allows the affiliate marketer to load their affiliate cookie onto your computer before you even land on the destination URL, and therefore there is no need to use the affiliate code tagged onto the end of the URL. It will appear as though the link is not an affiliate link at all, and yet the black hatter will still secretly earn the commission.

– Taken a step further, this cookie embedding process can also allow the black hat affiliate to embed multiple affiliate cookies into their link for the affiliate program that they're promoting as well as any competitors cookies. This way, if the customer doesn't buy from the site you send them to and then later ends up on a competitors' site, the black hat affiliate still earns the commission.

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– Now taking this feature another step further, this black hat affiliate tool can secretly hide rotating affiliate cookies embedded within a webpage. This sneaky tactic allows for cookie after cookie to be added for numerous affiliate programs that are all tracked to the black hat affiliate.

– Going even further upon this feature is the ability to embed any link with multiple rotating affiliate cookies. Again this can load your computer with affiliate cookies for any and all affiliate programs that the black hat affiliate desires to earn commissions from. What's more, is that this sneaky black hat affiliate link will innocently look like any other link, and can be published anywhere without anyone knowing what it's capable of when clicked!

Sounds like the invention of a mad scientist trying to take over the affiliate marketing world through the exploitation of ingenious black hat programming loopholes.

So are these black hat affiliate tactics legal? Yes, if the affiliate program doesn't specify otherwise within their terms of service.

Are these black hat affiliate tactics ethical? That all depends on your personal code of ethics, and whether you would use the tools ethically, or whether you would use them in every way possible to earn as many commissions as you can with no respect for your customers.

Do you want this black hat toolkit? Forget it! There are only 1,500 available, and by the time you read this they'll probably already be gone. After that, John Reel will be parading as an angel, selling his white hat tools, but don't be fooled by this wolf in sheep's clothing.

Jambhala Rinpo is a viral affiliate marketer and joint venture broker.

<http://www.AffiliateSuperNetwork.com/blackhatwhite>

– Black hat tools or white hat tools, and free affiliate link cloaking tools.

What Makes For Ethical Search Engine Optimization Tactics?

By Gabriel Adams

If you've hung around in the search engine optimization industry (a.k.a. SEO industry) very long, you've probably heard the debate on ethical SEO tactics. Or, as it is often put, white hat tactics versus black hat tactics.

What exactly makes a search engine optimization tactic ethical or unethical? According to the dictionary, an ethical practice is one "conforming to accepted standards of social or professional behavior". For search engine optimization, I believe that we should get at least some of the "accepted standards" from the search engines themselves.

Some SEO experts would interject that the search engines don't want search engine optimizers to exist at all, so if we ask the search engines, all search engine optimization is unethical. That's not true, though. Google itself says that "Many SEOs provide useful services for website owners...However, a few unethical SEOs have given the industry a black eye."

So...what makes an unethical SEO? Once again, Google has an opinion on the subject: "Avoid tricks ...to improve search engine rankings. A good rule of thumb is whether you'd feel comfortable explaining what you've done to a website that competes with you."

Perhaps a better way to put it would be this: You've gotten a phone call from Sam, who is a Google search results quality enforcement officer. He says: "John, I see that you are ranked #1 on the keyword xyz. I want to be sure that you did this in an ethical manner. What methods did you use?" If you feel comfortable telling Google how you got top ranked, then you're probably OK.

Of course, those are only general guidelines. Read the Google and Yahoo webmaster guidelines. You'll find many specifics. You'll also find that the golden rule of ethical search engine optimization is: "Don't do anything to trick the search engines, or to represent your pages differently to the search engines than you do your human visitors."

Visit the David Williams Corporation for your Ethical Search Engine Optimization needs!

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