

Google, Wherefore Art Thou Google? Sites Abandoned by Googlebot!

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By Mike Banks Valentine

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As a search engine optimization specialist I often optimize existing web pages for small business clients, upload them to the site and see pages re-indexed by Google within a week. This only happens with existing business sites that have been online for a few years. Google seems to be updating their index as often as every other week at this point and older established sites that are already indexed seem to be re-crawled on that twice a month schedule on a fairly routine basis.

Two clients that hired me for recent work saw their rankings shoot to the top for a newly targeted search phrase in a weekend when I did optimization on a Thursday and they were ranked instantly by Saturday. Now keep in mind that this doesn't happen for everyone, only those that have been online for some period and already have significant content that simply needs tweaking and proper title and metatag information added. They usually have relatively good existing PageRank and do well for other RELEVANT search phrases already. I offer that warning only to avoid instilling false hopes in anyone hoping to achieve the same instant ranking boost overnight.

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Those clients that do succeed in this way are often thrilled with the results accomplished in such short order. I'd love to be able to offer that type of ranking boosts to everyone, but some are more equal than others when it comes to easy, inexpensive SEO tune-ups that rev up your rankings overnight. Your mileage may vary.

### WHY DO NEW SITES SUFFER?

What is going on with newer sites that don't get crawled for months? I've got a client, a newer attorney directory that offers tons of great information in the form of articles on specific areas of law, links to incredibly valuable and relevant legal sites and over 600,000 attorneys listed by

practice area and state. Yet the site has not been re-crawled by Google for over 3 months! Now this would not be such a big issue for many sites, but this site is relatively new and we've optimized all the titles, tags & page text, created a complete site map and placed links to all these resources on the front page.

I know that the site is not being crawled because Google's cached copy of the front page shows it before we did the work four months ago, without the new links and without title tags. We've submitted the site by hand, (manually) once a month for three months via the Google Add URL page. <http://www.google.com/addurl.html> When the hand submission failed to get it re-indexed for four months, we submitted the sitemap page, which has not been crawled at all. Google shows only ONE page on this site, when in fact it has thousands of pages, a sitemap and dozens static pages!

Part of the problem is that this site must be dynamic, since a database of over 632,000 attorneys must be accessed, retrieved and served for any of those law firms searched for to be returned to the site visitor. Google warns owners of dynamic sites that Googlebot may not crawl dynamically generated pages with "?" question marks in the URL. This is to avoid crashing the server with too many concurrent page requests from Google's spider.  
<http://www.google.com/webmasters/2.html#A1>

The solution to this dynamic URL problem has been discussed widely in search engine forums and solutions have been bandied

about including software provided by SEO's, URL re-write techniques for dynamic pages on APACHE servers <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/urls/> and PHP pages <http://www.stargeek.com/php-seo.php> to generate search engine friendly URL's. Others recommend simply adding static HTML sitemap pages as alternatives for the search engine spiders.

In this instance the client's developer simply said "I can't do that (PHP solution) on this server". So we resorted to putting up the static HTML sitemap pages with hard-coded URLs to the main 54 pages of the site at <http://lawfirm411.com/Law-Firm-411-sitemap.html> This should get at least those fifty pages crawled by Googlebot, but Googles' spider appears not to be crawling this site at all.

How do we know this? See for yourself by using the following query in the search box at Google: `allinurl:www.lawfirm411.com` where the result page shows ONE page in the results. If you

try that query on your own site (replace your own domain name for `lawfirm411.com`), you'll see the results lists ALL your pages.

The site home page was crawled by Google four months ago, when they took their "Cached Snapshot" of the page. You can see this by visiting the Google cached page here:

<http://66.102.7.104/search?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&q=cache:www.lawfirm411.com>

where the date of this snapshot is "Apr 20, 2004 07:42:19 GMT" and they haven't been back since. The page in that snapshot has none of the newly added links, an outdated title tag, and old content.

This problem is not unique to this site. One client we worked with two years ago had a dynamically generated, framed site! Those two site structures have always given search engines trouble. Their site was not crawled at all and only the front page showed up. Our solution was to create a second domain (owned by the client), which had static HTML pages that precisely mirrored the content of the client's framed, dynamically generated site. Guess what happened after Googlebot crawled the static site? Google indexed the framed site in full and then banned the static site from the index!

Not an approach we advocate, but the one that worked for this client.

We're still searching for ways to get Googlebot back to LawFirm411.com before creating that new static site, but decided to share this odd experience with the SEO community before going to any extremes. Google provides over 70% of most search engine referred traffic to ALL of our clients and we realized we can't sit idly by and see a major client languish because Googlebot didn't like what it found at the client site on the first visit four months ago.

This issue dogs newer sites in other places as well. The Open Directory Project has also become notoriously slow in adding new sites to the directory and in this case, has not picked up this site even after 6 regular monthly submissions. The web playing field may have begun tilting toward older, established sites and away from new ones.

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-----Mike Banks Valentine is  
the SEO for  
<http://www.lawfirm411.com> Contact him at [http://www.seoptimism.com/SEO\\_Contact.htm](http://www.seoptimism.com/SEO_Contact.htm) Improve Your  
Small Business Online at our Ecommerce  
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**This is not official as expected Google will not ...**

**By Brian Hart**

This is not official as expected Google will not confirm this, but I have been researching a lot on this subject and found this to be true.

I have a number of websites less than six months old still not ranked on Google and sites that are older that are. The SEO information site news have run tests on this themselves and found the same to be true.

So why they have done this we do not know but all I can guess is Google are looking for well rooted sites on the search engine.

If you want to get ranked on Google you will have to use a domain name older than one year or at a push six months old.

Do not get put off by this as there are lots of other search engines out there, we do not know if the other search engines will copy this but if they do this would not be good.

## Google, Wherefore Art Thou Google? Sites Abandoned by Googlebot!

You should continue to submit to Google and run business as usual but do not fall into the spam trap, what I mean by this is submitting to Google over and over as you do not see your website.

Google can ban your domain and put it into the sand pit this is something else Google will not confirm.

New sites still get a page rank you no the green bar in the tools bar but the link popularity do not seem to be right.

If you found this article of some use then that makes me happy.

Brian Hart

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Brian Hart also known as Lazerbri has been working on the net for over 15 years, he is a Programmer in HTML and PHP and also Flash



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