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Link Building in Light of Vision-based Page Segmentation

By Andy Hagans

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The days of basing a successful link building strategy on link quantity and anchor text alone may be numbered. The link popularity theories behind PageRank and Hilltop remain important, but major search engines are continually adding new elements to their link algorithms to improve search relevance. One of these new elements is the concept of visual page segmentation which was recently proposed in a paper entitled "Block-level Link Analysis," by Deng Cai, Xiaofei He, Ji-Rong Wen and Wei-Ying, available online at http://research.microsoft.com/research/pubs/view.aspx?tr_id=690.

How VIPS Works

The paper introduces Vision-based Page Segmentation (VIPS), which begins with the premise that current link popularity algorithms are faulty in that they consider each page on the World Wide Web as a single node. Different "blocks" on a page however often have different semantics; for instance, a block on the left side of the page might contain a general navigational menu or text link advertisements, whereas the block on the right side of the page might contain an informational article or links to other Web sites about a certain topic. When VIPS is applied, these blocks can be separated by a computer with a vision-based program. Each block can then be considered as the fundamental unit of analysis, rather than the entire page. When a link is scored in terms of its block, the link's contextual relevance can be interpreted more intelligently by search engines.

What VIPS Means for Search Engine Optimization

In the near future major search engines such as Google, Yahoo! Web Search and MSN Search will likely integrate some form of visual page segmentation into their search algorithms. A successful search engine optimization strategy should incorporate knowledge of block-level analysis to ensure that the effects of a link building campaign will be maximized. But how exactly does a concept like VIPS affect search engine optimization? Two consequences in particular should make every SEO take pause.

Devaluation of Links from Certain Blocks

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VIPS will allow search engines to differentiate between links from the content block and links from other blocks such as text advertisement blocks or footer blocks. As such, algorithms could easily weight links from each block differently.

A link from the content block could be considered as more likely to be a true recommendation than a link from a text link advertisement block. Search engines may therefore give extra weight to in-content links while devaluing links that appear to be advertisements. Sites that rent links through link networks usually do place them in a block above, below or to the side of the content block. When VIPS is implemented, there is a risk that many rented advertisement links could be devalued.

Improved Contextual Analysis

The theme in which your link is placed also will be more important than ever before. Many search engine optimizers have voiced their opinion that *“anchor text is everything”*; that is, the theme of a page linking to a Web site does not parse link relevance, but only the anchor text of the link does.

With block-level analysis, search engines will be able to recognize the theme of any given block more easily. This should have the effect of boosting the link relevance for links from tightly-themed content blocks, while devaluing links that are in a block with no apparent theme.

Links That Will Always Soar

A search engine optimizer need not fear the effects of Vision-based Page Segmentation. Although VIPS will probably devalue certain types of links that are favored by many SEOs, it will concurrently increase the value of themed, in-context links.

I have always stressed the value of legitimate links from directories, articles and press releases. These types of links are placed in a content block and are also tightly themed (that is, your target keywords will be near your link). Webmasters who actively build these types of links will benefit from long term rankings even when new twists such as VIPS are added into the algorithmic mix. In fact, these algorithmic improvements should improve search relevance and neutralize some of the spammier link building methods. And that's something we should all be happy about.

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to help other webmasters.

Building A Link Exchange Directory

By LND Marketing

There is great value in true reciprocal links; however, if you manage your links pages properly, those pages can also bring you additional search engine traffic. Tips in organizing your link exchange directory. – Ensure your main directory categories page is linked from your main page. It's important that search engines can find it. Having properly organized link pages will provide you with strong keyword based pages. If you have a sitemap generated, include your full directory in there as well. Not only will this benefit you, but also your link exchange partner will get the proper credit for the exchange. – Keep each site theme on it's own page. Group all home-based business websites on one page, all sports websites on another, all web hosting on it's own, etc... – Keep the pages short. It is bad practice to put 100++ links on a page. Ideally the maximum amount of reciprocal links on one page should be 20 and link to additional pages as needed. – Modify your Meta tags Set your Meta tags to reflect the contents of that link page – Always link back to your main site On each link exchange page ensure you have a keyword-based text link back to your main URL. If someone finds your website through a search engine based on a page from your directory, you will want them to visit your main page ;-) Keep your link back to your main page in a prominent place within your directory pages. – Keep a submission form for surfers to request a link exchange

Having a reciprocal link exchange form available for surfers saves you some time in searching out true reciprocal link exchanges. When a link is submitted for inclusion in your directory. Ensure it meets the true reciprocal link principals; make every link exchange count! – Automate as much as possible. There are several very impressive link exchange scripts available for free on the Internet. These scripts can save you time and money while you are building your link exchange directory. And lastly.... – Update Regularly Make it part of your routine to exchange links on a regular basis. Whether you have time to exchange a few links a day, a week or a month, making true reciprocal link exchanges will benefit your site for years to come.

LND Marketing;

mentoring and training home-based business seekers on

the internet for over 9 years. Initially marketing online to help others generate a secondary income in the comfort of their home with

is now offering true reciprocal link

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