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SEOs Who Party Like It's 1999

By Kalena Jordan

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Search engine optimization has come full circle in the last couple of years.

Back in the mid 1990s it was easy to achieve high search engine rankings. Just tweak your META tags and site copy with keywords and submit. Then, as more and more webmasters started to catch on to META Tags, it became more difficult to beat the competition. Many companies turned to spam tactics such as hidden text (the same color as the background of the page), hidden links (using 1 x 1 pixel gifs to hide them), doorway pages stuffed with keywords and cloaked content, all designed to be seen by search engine robots and not humans in an attempt to trick the search engines into giving the site a higher ranking.

Thankfully, over the past few years, achieving high search rankings has become fairer and more straight-forward. The search engines have given less weighting to META tags and more relevancy weighting to sites that are popular, of high quality and contain unique, relevant information. Most search engines have developed comprehensive spam filters that weed out the spammers from the legitimate sites and penalize sites caught trying to cheat the system. Google in particular has led the charge for quality over quantity.

Fortunately, the web site aspects that most search engines prefer are also those that visitors prefer. Build a quality site with plenty of text, up-to-date, relevant content that other sites link to, a solid navigation system, submit it by hand to popular directories and search engines and you will be on your way to high rankings in no time. It's not difficult, it's not tricky and it certainly doesn't involve any black magic.

That's why I find it difficult to understand search engine optimizers who party like it's 1999 – using invisible text and hidden links in some pathetic, misguided attempt to trick the search engines into believing their site content is the most relevant. I mean, what are they thinking? I've heard excuses like "the search engine guidelines are unclear so we have no choice but to push the envelope". Give me a break. The search engine guidelines are quite obvious to those who are actually good at SEO and understand what is necessary to achieve results for their clients. Many search engines even publish

their guidelines clear as day on their sites. Unfortunately, it seems this industry is full of lazy non-performers who prefer to rely on outdated cheat sheets that haven't worked for years.

I am so sick of all the cowboy SEO firms who clog up the search engine indices with meaningless keyword-stuffed pages, in a vain attempt to dominate the search rankings with their client's sites. Don't they do any research? Don't they read the search engine guidelines? Don't they understand these tactics are fruitless and ineffective? Don't they know these techniques haven't worked for years and are regarded as spamming? Don't they realize they are putting their client's sites at risk of ranking penalties or outright banning? Don't they care about the long term effects and the future of their client's web sites?

To see an example of these blatant spamming techniques, visit Google.com and type in a search for

"new zealand power companies". Visit the first site in the results (a doorway page), right click the page with your mouse and choose "select all". Run your mouse over the darkened area at the bottom left of the page. See all the hidden links? All leading to yet more doorway pages.

This second example is trickier to find because it appears that Google has already penalized it. Go to Google.com and type in a search for "shopping new zealand must involve a visit". Check out the second page in the results (another doorway) and have a close look at the little arrows in near invisible font at the bottom of the page next to "more". Each one of those arrows leads to another doorway page stuffed with more keywords. I've even seen examples of companies hiding thousands of keywords in CSS tags or tables that are coded to an extreme left or right position so they don't actually appear on the visible page.

What is the point of these tactics? Even if they go unreported, Google will eventually locate the spam and degrade or ban the pages. It makes no sense to me why SEO firms would take such risks with their client's sites when it is so much easier to get good results using the methods recommended by the search engines.

But as bad as spammy SEO firms are, there are worse offenders. These are the spammy SEO firms who like to propagate myth and legend by publishing articles that are misleading, deceptive and often downright false. No wonder webmasters are confused when it comes to search engines and no wonder there are more cowboy SEO spammers springing up every day. With the amount of incorrect information floating around out there, it is extremely difficult for newcomers to sort out fact from fiction.

The sad thing is that many of these spam propagators justify their rubbish with endorsements from big name marketers or influential web marketing firms who allow them to speak at conferences and seminars and spread their misinformation. Some of these spam propagators have even set up their own training schools to educate people in deceptive SEO tactics.

It really rankles me when I see faulty advice such as the following being circulated to unsuspecting webmasters:

"...you could place content inside of the tag, even though the site isn't in frames...it's also not

something that's likely to get you in trouble with Google as long as the content is relevant to your page."

Creating content designed to be hidden from viewers and shown only to search engines by misleading use of a tag meant for a frames-based page? I am almost certain Google would have a problem with that. What type of example are these people trying to set? To think they are actually teaching these tactics to future webmasters is beyond comprehension.

So what can you do to fight back the spam propagators? For starters:

1) Study the search engine guidelines such as those outlined at:

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/guidelines.html>

<http://insite.lycos.com/searchservices/tutorial.asp>

<http://ask.ineedhits.com/programterms.asp?n=u#spam>

2) Circulate articles like this one to other webmasters

3) Spend time in knowledgeable webmaster forums such as <http://www.ihelpyouservices.com/forums/>

4) Make sure you report any cases of search engine spamming to Google (<http://www.google.com/contact/spamreport.html>) and the other search engines as soon as you spot them.

When we cut spammers off at the source, we can stop the spread of misinformation and all benefit from the results.

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Party Planning For Dummies

By Patty Illomia

Planning for a party is no small stuff. It can be really hard to plan for any kind of party and the more important your party is the more stress you are bound to be under. It is a good thing for you that I am here to write this spectacular party planning article to help you to plan the perfect party for any occasion.

Party planning needs to start with a budget. You cannot just go out and start purchasing things willy-nilly without a budget and a plan. SO begin your party planning with making up a good budget. How much money do you have to spend on your party? Decide on a reasonable amount and then break this party planning budget down into sections.

Your party planning sections should look something like this, food, decorations, party favors, and plates, cups and napkins. Once you have this stage of your party planning finished you can then start filling in the columns. How many dishes will you need? Is this the kind of party that requires party favors? This is one of the most important aspects of party planning and it is what will make your shopping for your party much, much easier. Once you have a defined list you can go out and start your shopping. Party planning can be stressful, sure, but it should also be fun. After all you are planning for a party, so enjoy it!

The food that you choose for your party is important to the entire event. You will have to take into consideration what kind of party it is that you are having in the party planning stage. For example, is your party planning being done for a birthday, or an anniversary? Is your party planning being done for a theme party? These types of things matter when you are trying to choose the foods that will suit your party to perfection. IF you are having a themed party then have foods that suit it. If you are having a luau themed party have Hawaiian foods and drinks or if you are having a Christmas party then have Christmas themed foods. This is just smart party planning and it will make your party all the more fun for everyone.

Patty Illomia owns and operates Instan Party Planning Ideas at

. You'll find many options and Ideas for Party Planning that

are right for you.



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