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**WebPosition Release v2.0 and Reject Reporting Issues**

**By Kalena Jordan**

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As you would have heard, FirstPlace Software, creators of the hugely popular WebPosition Gold search engine marketing software, recently announced the forthcoming release of the long-awaited version 2 of their product. WPG v2.0 is already available in Beta format (see link below) and boasts an impressive number of new features to help web masters ensure their web sites are spider friendly, ranking highly and submitted to the most appropriate search engines and directories worldwide.

I recently took the opportunity to interview President of FirstPlace Software, Brent Winters, about their new product and also about his views on the increasing crackdown on automatic reporting tools by some of the major search engines.

Below is a transcript of the interview:

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(WR) = Web Rank, (BW) = Brent Winters

Question 1 (WR) – Why has it taken so long for FirstPlace Software to release a new (BETA) version of WebPosition Gold?

(BW) A couple of factors contributed to the delay. We under-estimated the amount of work to keep the current version up to date with the continuous changes at the search engines, while still contributing resources to version 2. We ended up spending time adding and removing engines in the existing product, adding new features, etc. so we were not standing still since version 1.0. In fact, we are on version 1.60.5 now.

We eventually added new developers to accelerate work on version 2. In addition, version 2 includes a tremendous number of new features and engines. In retrospect, we should have scaled back the number of features for version 2 and saved more for version 3. Fortunately, our customers will benefit from getting a lot of bang for their buck when they upgrade.

Question 2 (WR) – In your opinion, what is the most important or significant feature of the new version?

(BW) There are so many important features it is difficult to boil it down to a single most important feature. Every customer will have their favorite depending on how they tend to use the product. Certainly the support for new country specific engines is a big one. Unlike other products, this support extends beyond just submission and reporting. The Page Critic also provides valuable advice for how to improve your rankings in over 75 major engines. A current (although not exhaustive) list of new features can be found at: <http://www.webposition.com/wpg2upgrade.htm>

Question 3 (WR) – The BETA version of WPG v2 includes regional search engines – something your

customers have been asking about for years. Why did it take so long to include these?

(BW) See above

Question 4 (WR) – Only a handful of countries were included in the regional engines. Do you plan to include other country search engines (e.g. New Zealand and more Asian countries) in future releases?

(BW) Please keep in mind that you are looking at a beta version right now. We are working hard to add new engines to fill any significant gaps and are listening to customer feedback. For example, you mentioned Asian countries. We already have support for some Japanese and Chinese engines and are working on adding more. We support a dozen different regions currently: Global/US, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, France, Spain/Latin America, Russia, Italy, Japan, China, Scandinavia and the Netherlands.

Some countries like the UK have support for eight or more engines already (or will very shortly). Others have only a few. How many they have depends on how many popular engines we are able to locate for that region, and how far along we are in the development of that region. Even after we release the product we will continue to add more engines (or remove engines) as things change and we receive feedback from customers. We may add support for entirely new regions depending upon demand.

Question 5 (WR) – The major search engines, most noticeably Google, have recently been taking a stand against the use of rank reporting software and even banning the IP addresses of persons using it. How has this impacted WPG sales and how will it affect future releases? Can you confidently say it is safe for customers to use WPG right now to check their ranks?

(BW) A very small percentage of customers had their IP blocked by Google in early 2001. I've heard of no one having their IP blocked for using WebPosition on any search engines for over six months since we released updates to more precisely emulate a browser. Version 2 includes an additional safety feature to slow down searches to a user-definable amount. That way you can be more courteous to the search engines while maintaining a lower profile. We continue to encourage customers to keep their queries to a minimum with the search engines (For example, there's generally no reason to run reports

every single day or for hundreds of keywords). You should also run reports at night whenever possible.

As far as our sales, they remain strong and demand for the product remains strong. Businesses with an on-line presence have a significant need to track and improve their search rankings. That is not a need that is likely to change anytime soon. Only the methodology and techniques to improve visibility on the engines have changed over the years and will continue to change. We'll continue to update the product to accommodate that.

Question 6 (WR) – Is there any scope for arrangements with search engines that allow your software limited access to their servers in a restricted reporting capacity, similar to Overture's recent 3rd Party provider agreement with Bid Management Software companies?

(BW) We already have formal affiliate agreements with many major engines including Overture, FindWhat, Looksmart, Bay9, Ah-Ha, About.com, and others. It is our goal to work with the search

engines whenever possible and reach mutually beneficial agreements. We approached Google last year, sending over half a dozen letters and faxes to various VP's in their organization.

We offered practical proposals to create a more mutually beneficial relationship. Eventually we gave up on the matter when their VP continued to fail to get back with us as promised. It does not appear to be a high priority issue at Google right now from what I can tell.

Question 7 (WR) – Do you have any exciting new features you plan to add to future WPG releases?

(BW) We always have many features we'd like to add. However, we're focusing our efforts right now on finishing the long-anticipated version 2 and making sure all the features included in it work really well. We may not bang out a major new upgrade every six months because we focus a great deal of effort to refining the product to work as advertised. Many companies focus on including every bell and whistle under the sun, whether it has value or not, and then invest little time to fixing bugs reported by customers. This can be maddening as a consumer and a huge time-waster if you buy a whiz-bang great product and then do nothing but waste time trying to battle crashes, lock ups, etc.

In our case, we are so serious about producing a quality product that we offer up to \$50 bug bounties to customers for being the first to find and report a problem. (These are credits good for the purchase of an upgrade, knowledge base subscription, or other product). It should also be kept in mind that we update the product weekly if not more often so our technology is never standing still between major upgrades. We also prefer to give customers new features and updates for free rather than trying to stick them with a new paid upgrade every six to eight months.

With version 2, we'll be continuing our policy of free product support. Much of our competition offers no phone support, or charges \$50 or more per call. We're also striving to maintain average e-mail response times at 24 hours or less. This has always been a priority issue for me since I've personally

been on the receiving end of bad customer support many times. I promised myself to run things differently when I founded this company ten years ago.

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Web Rank would like to thank Brent Winters for taking the time to respond to our questions. If you have additional questions about WebPosition Gold as a result of reading this interview, please visit the links below, or email WebPosition support staff via [help@webposition.com](mailto:help@webposition.com). If you'd like to trial the Beta version of WPG v2.0 please download it from the link below.

More: <http://www.webposition.com/d2.pl?r=GCU-55EC> (home page)  
<http://www.webposition.com/wpg2upgrade.htm> (outline of features in v2.0)

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Article by Kalena Jordan, CEO of Web Rank. Kalena was one of the first search engine optimization experts in Australia & New Zealand and is well known and respected in her field. For more of her

articles on search engine ranking and online marketing, please visit <http://www.high-search-engine-ranking.com>

## **The New WebPosition Gold 3 . . . Definitely Worth the Wait**

**By Robin Nobles**

### **The New WebPosition Gold 3 . . . Definitely Worth the Wait by Robin Nobles**

At the special request of my students, I've taken a long look at WebPosition Gold 3 (<http://www.webposition.com>), and I can honestly say I'm amazed at how this software program has matured and developed through the years.

Let's take a tour of the most popular software program in the search engine marketing industry, and let's see "what's new" in WebPosition 3.

The New Interface . . .

When you first open the software, past users of WebPosition will be surprised at the totally new interface. It's clean, simple, and quite appealing. You can still click on New or Open on the

top toolbar to start a new project or open an existing one, or you can click on any of the icons on the left-hand side of the screen.

Important: If you experience any problems connecting to the Internet via WebPosition, try adding WebPosition to your accepted programs list in your firewall software. Or, you could try temporarily disabling your firewall to see if it's related to that. If you still have any problems, simply write to [help@webposition.com](mailto:help@webposition.com). WebPosition is well known for having a top-notch tech support department.

### Wordtracker Keywords . . .

With WebPosition 3, you can now conduct keyword research with Wordtracker right through WebPosition 3! If you don't have a Wordtracker account, you'll be using the free trial version of Wordtracker, which means you'll be researching using the MSN search engine and Keyword Universe. If you have a Wordtracker account, you can enter your Wordtracker username and password by clicking on the Edit menu on the WebPosition toolbar and choosing, "Wordtracker Settings."

Important: Since WebPosition 3 now has the Wordtracker keyword area, if you have a Wordtracker account, should you cancel that account? No! Unless you're going to be happy with the free trial

version of Wordtracker, don't cancel your Wordtracker account. Instead, use the WebPosition 3 interface to pull up your existing Wordtracker account.

### Reporter . . .

Though this feature isn't new, my favorite part of WebPosition has always been Reporter, and it still is. This one area is worth the cost of the entire software program.

As search engine marketers, it's important to keep up with your search engine rankings. You need to know which pages are ranking in the top 30 for which keywords.

While it's important for you to know your rankings, remember that you don't need to check your rankings every day or even every week. Once a month or once every other week is sufficient.

Use moderation! Don't check hundreds or thousands of keywords across several domains. Don't hammer the search engines. Remember that you're using their resources when you check rankings. Run ranking reports at night PST.

### Page Critic . . .

After creating your pages, you'll want to run them through a software program for some last minute checks.

For example, is the page too long? Too short? Are you overusing your keyword phrase? Underusing it?

WebPosition 3 offers some very helpful suggestions that you may want to consider.

With WebPosition 3, they've introduced a "Generic Search Engine," which I'm particularly pleased about. Over the last few years, many search engine marketers no longer create engine specific pages, so having a generic choice in Page Critic will be extremely helpful.

Tip to make Page Critic easier to use: When you first begin using Page Critic, you may find it easier to focus on the Page Averages section only. Click on that tab at the top of the Page Critic results. Go through each of the suggestions.

But, if you can't make the change or if it doesn't work for you, move on. Don't spend hours stressing over it. If you want to work with other sections of Page Critic after you get used to the program, you can certainly do so. But by cutting down on the

amount of information you're focusing on in the beginning, you may feel it's not as overwhelming.

### Mission Manager . . .

I'm very impressed with this new addition to WebPosition! But first, let me explain what "missions" are.

Every time you work on a project in WebPosition, you're creating a "mission." For example, when you run a ranking report on a particular domain, you're running a Reporter "mission" on that domain.

When you run a page through Page Critic, you're running a Page Critic "mission" on that page.

Mission Manager lets you manage those missions from one central location. I can see where this area will be particularly handy for those people who manage several domains. You can see at a glance which missions are scheduled to be run and at what times.

WebTrends Analytics . . .

This one area of WebPosition is a little confusing, mainly because WebTrends has many different software and Web-based solutions.

However, please don't let the choices stop you from trying WebTrends. Analyzing the traffic to your site is a crucial "next step" to success for your online business, and WebTrends has always been a leader in log analysis solutions.

In the beginning, why not try WebTrends On Demand, which is a Web-based service where you're given a small amount of code to cut and paste to the bottom of each of your Web pages. When you want to check your log files, you can log into their Web site. It's an easy-to-use, cost effective solution that you'll certainly want to consider. (Trial version:  
<http://www.netiq.com/webtrends/products/webtrends/trial.asp>)

Cost Remains the Same . . .

One thing that has really impressed me is that WebPosition has kept the cost of this new version the same, though they certainly could have justified a price increase. Plus, if you have a current version of WebPosition, you can upgrade at a 50% discount. Very fair! (Trial version:  
<http://www.webposition.com/order/trial.asp>)

In Conclusion . . .

WebPosition Gold 3 (<http://www.webposition.com>) has once again proven to be the leader in search engine marketing software. This exciting new software program deserves a long look by anyone in the SEO industry.



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