

Link Popularity - The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

By Julia Tilton

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So, you have a website full of great content, optimized for the search engines, but still not ranking well? Maybe it's time to build your link popularity.

Link popularity is a measure of the quantity and quality of sites that link to your site. The theory is that great sites will attract many links while poor sites won't. But, you noticed that word "quality", right? Yep, the search engines will consider the quality of your links, not just how many you have. So, just as you've tweaked your meta tags and keyword density, you need to be sure your links also show the relevancy of your site.

So what are those pesky search engine spiders looking for?

The GOOD (increase link popularity):

1. In coming links from quality sites related to the topic of your site
2. Links from major directories

The BAD (most likely ignored by search engines):

1. In coming links from FFA pages, or other low quality sites
2. In coming links from sites with topics unrelated to your site's topic

The UGLY (likely to damage your link popularity):

1. Links from sites that are nothing but a link or banner "farm"
2. Links to your site that are buried in a long list of links on unrelated sites

By the way, the engines look at the links OUT of your site, too. As much as possible, out-going links should provide your visitor with an additional valuable source of information related to your website's topic.

Do your best to avoid the temptation to add your website URL to any site that will have you, or to exchange a link with anyone who asks. And, be very careful about using software to build a "link page". If these sites are low quality and/or irrelevant to the topic of your website, exchanging links with them can actually damage your link popularity.

So, what's the best way to get good links?

Your number one strategy is to fill your site with great content. No one wants to link to a site with poor content. And you're more likely to get links without even having to ask! Second, get listed in

the major directories. Third, seek out quality sites with topics related to yours and request that they link to you site, or (more likely) if they will exchange a link with you.

The search for links can be tedious, but it's definitely worth the time and effort. Fortunately for all of us, there's a new free service that will drastically cut that time and effort. For more information visit [">http://www.jtwebsites.com/linkpopularity.html#link](http://www.jtwebsites.com/linkpopularity.html#link)

- Even if you're not interested in increasing your search engine ranking, being listed on other relevant sites is still a good idea. These types of links will sometimes bring you a lot of traffic all on their own!

Julia Tilton is a consultant to individuals and small businesses interested in establishing a web presence.

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