

Top Five Sins of the Startpage Exchanges

By Pamela Heywood

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Right now, these exchanges are generating more traffic to my site than any other single method ever has. They are a great tool, as any, in the right hands. They may not work next week, who knows, but that's the nature of the Internet.

What IS certain is that they can be made to work HARDER for you right now. Just a few tweaks can make all the difference between merely counting numbers of useless hits and using this great *moving billboard advertising system* to effectively generate real live leads for your business.

1. Broken Links

Goodness knows how many hits I have earned looking at *The page cannot be displayed* or worse, *The page you are looking for is no longer on this web site* or the even funnier, *you are not authorised to see this* ...

OK, so once in a while it might be that a site is only momentarily down, but that does not account for the large number of error screens I see, day in, day out.

Hey, that might be YOUR credits I am using, so check that the link you gave actually works. This has to be one of the dumbest, yet simplest errors to correct.

Sign up for a free monitoring service so you know if your page goes down for any length of time.

2. Third-Party Page Rotators

They are UGLY! They look unprofessional and it adds yet another waiting time to the downloading process as the rotator page is called by the exchange and the rotator goes off in search of the *real* page it has to display ... etc.

Yawn! Yawn! Clickaway!

Yes, I know there are *experts* out there telling you to use them as part of their system. Choose your experts wisely!

I've also earned a lot of my hits looking at the top and bottom frames of the rotator thing with a BIG BLANK white space in the middle. And LONG before anything actually appeared in there, I'd clicked on my *NEXT* button.

By far, THE most important reason why you don't want to use one of these rotators, is because you do NOT even need to serve up a variety of offerings. The place for doing that is on YOUR unique website and/or in YOUR ezine.

3 Java Applets, Flash, Banner Farms, Gratuitous graphics

Anything that is just there for aesthetics increases download time. You don't need it here. You probably don't need it elsewhere either, but that's a whole different article. I as a surfer, certainly don't need it when it crashes my computer because it sucks up far too much memory on top of all the pages I have open.

Besides, it loads too slow for me to actually see it!

4. Popups, unders

They have their place, but it isn't here and it isn't going to endear you to potential sign-ups or clients.

In fact, one exchange, ViralVisitors.com is now giving members FOUR FREE PopUp & Exit Ad killers. They say:

"These can be particularly annoying when you are trying to surf for visitor credits. Many will slow down your browser functions, eat up your Ram and occasionally lock up your browser so a reboot is necessary."

If it's an exit exchange or similar, you may use a credit without getting an actual page view back.

5. Affiliate/Program Sites

I'm NOT going to sit there reading why XYZ opportunity is

the best thing since sliced bread and why I should sign up right now. I'm certainly not hanging around long enough to consider the pros and cons of actually spending money.

Besides, I've probably already seen that one 120 times in the last hour alone. I've developed immunity!

I can hear you arguing that their site is more professional than your efforts. It might be, but it was NEVER designed for these exchanges: their pages are generally far too complex for the job in hand and will load too slowly.

And what about if your program goes offline, stops taking sign-ups even temporarily, closes for cleaning out their database or, worse, goes belly up?

I see those every day too. That's someone's credits getting eaten. Make sure they aren't yours.

Do it right: treat these exchanges as you should small ads and ezine ads. Don't go for direct hits, just collect email addresses: leads that you can follow-up later. Then you won't just have hits today, but you'll have built contacts and business that will last you forever.

Pamela Heywood runs a successful Free Advertising Co-Op, which is doing great on the exchanges, as well as publishing her own ezine: <mailto:eacz-subscribe@auto.pipelinemail.com>
The Intelligent Approach to Surf Page Traffic!
<http://www.tucats-design.com/rd/curiosity.html>

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