

## The Significance of Links for your Website Ranking



If you have just visited a new web site, then the chances are, you clicked on a link directing you to this newly discovered website. A website without anyone linking to it is like a business without any coordinates - no one knows about you.

Links not only direct a person to a website but they also direct a spider (a search engine's information gathering program) to the website. Links help your site to get noticed and indexed by search engines. The number of linkages to your website demonstrates the popularity of your website to search engines. The more the better.

There are three ways that people can find your

website:

1. The Internet surfer types the entire URL (website address) into the command line of their browser. This option requires that your URL is pre-selected or known.
2. The Internet surfer clicks on an advertisement or sponsored links that sends him to your website. This is a huge form of paid internet advertising.
3. The Internet surfer locates you by typing certain keywords (let us call it a key-phrase) or your company name into a search engine. Eighty five percent of all traffic to websites is directed by search engines.

Therefore it is very important that your website is listed in the results provided by search engines, when you type a key-phrase in your favourite search engine.

Not all websites are listed in the results, and the top page is restricted to only ten websites. If your website is not listed on the top page of a search engine, then the probability of people clicking on your website is next to zero.

This series of articles will focus on methods of ranking your web site high with search engines, starting with Linkages.

There are over 5 billion documents on the World Wide Web today. You use search engines such as Google, MSN, or Yahoo to help sift through this gigantic collection of documents to find the specific information you need.

Research has shown that Internet surfers who are looking for something on the Internet by typing a key-phrase into a search engine, hardly ever read beyond the first page of search results. If the surfer does not find what he or she is looking for in those 10 websites listed, only then will he or she go to the next page.

Thus your goal should be to get your website listed on the first page of search engines for site-relevant key-phrases. The art of making your website ranking high with search engines is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

SEO is the way to go if you are looking to INCREASE TARGETED TRAFFIC to your site.

If you are marketing products or services via your website, using search engines works better for promoting your site for a number of reasons:

- A top search engine ranking often translates into hundreds of new qualified visitors each month. It is reasonable to anticipate a steady stream of qualified traffic when your Web site achieves continuous top rankings on multiple search engines.
- When an Internet surfer types a keyword into a search engine, they have already identified the product or service they need more information about. The search reflects a definite level of interest by a potential buyer.
- Search engines are the most important tools for locating companies and their products on the Internet. Over half of all Internet users search the Web every day, and searching is the second most popular Internet activity. (Email is # 1!)

Since Google is the dominant player, I will use the word Google synonymously with 'search engine'.

Google ranks a website high if the website is popular (i.e. has high traffic). An important method to boost traffic is to get links pointing to your web site. Although PPC (Pay per click) provides the links (incurring expenses) many visitors hesitate to click on such sponsored links, therefore I favour non-paid links which I call "organic" links (which are found listed below the sponsored links).

One method to get links is to exchange links with related industry/sector's websites. So before you build your website have a linkage strategy in place; they may be your suppliers, customers or media. In the case of the Society of Internet Professionals (SIP) we were not proactive and waited for media, directories, magazines and our members to provide us links. This worked for SIP as we have been around since the early days of the internet, as of the last count there were 316 pages linking to our website.

A blog (web diary) linking your web site is also a good visibility. We just started a SIP blog called: <http://sipgroup.blogspot.com/> Within a month we had the blog listed as one of the sites in a Google search for SIP's home page links.

Please note that link popularity alone does not necessary ensure high ranking of your web site (for your keywords). I will cover some other SEO techniques in future notes, starting with Significance of Keywords or Key-phrases.

In summary, start by getting your web site indexed by search engines (there are hundreds of search engines but Google, MSN and Yahoo predominate). Filling in forms and submitting them to the search engines is no longer very effective; let the spiders of these search engines find your website. One way these robotics programs find your website is through a link from another web site.

When you build a website, build a content rich, well-structured and user friendly website. Both spiders and humans like these type of websites. Make sure your links are not broken. Neither spiders nor humans forgive you for that 404 error "page not found".

Happy linking!

Max Haroon  
Search Engine Marketing Specialist  
© Max Haroon 2006



## TIPS

It is important that your website should have been indexed by search engines, to benefit from linkages. To find pages or websites that link to your website, go to Google and type "link:" followed by the URL of the web site:



Example: link: [www.sipgroup.org](http://www.sipgroup.org) (result 316 pages link to the main page of SIP)

If there are no web sites listed for the above result, then your website may not have been indexed by Google.



## RESOURCES

1. Visit <http://www.sipgroup.org/> for various resources and membership of the Society of Internet Professionals (SIP)
2. To find out who links to your website: <http://wholinkstome.com/>
3. Link popularity check and some resources: <http://www.marketleap.com/publinkpop/>
4. A resource intensive portal for SEO and link popularity: <http://searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/popularity.html>

## About the Author



**Max Haroon**, AIP is the Founding President of the Society of Internet Professionals. He has been involved in the Information Technology (IT) industry in various sectors, including the Internet and IT Training for over 25 years. He has completed many consulting assignments, forging alliances, as well as initiating various entrepreneurial enterprises. His work has spanned many countries in three continents. He provides consulting services in creating advisory boards, leveraging internet for business usage, and search engine marketing & optimization. He has optimized many web sites including SIP's website and has drafted e-Marketing strategies for various organizations. He can be contacted by email to [founder@sipgroup.org](mailto:founder@sipgroup.org) or by phone at 416-891-4937.