SEO
AUTHORITY

SEO TOOL
MANAGEMENT
MADE EASY

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About the author…

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Liz Tomey got her start in the marketing world at the age of 19 by starting her own direct mail/mail order business. Liz created several product and services to help others in the direct mail/mail order business build their businesses quickly and easily. She's successfully run this business since 1998.

In late 2004 Liz took the Internet marketing arena by storm by creating products and services especially for Internet marketers. These proven to work products are what have allowed Liz to become the well-known and liked Internet marketer that she is today.

The IM Truth newsletter is also published by Liz where she focuses more on teaching no BS marketing techniques rather than pushing the "product of the day". This newsletter allows her to help Internet marketers push their business to new levels.

Liz is also the owner and sole creator of some of the hottest sites in Internet marketing.

TomeyMarketing.com - This is Liz's main site. You can see exactly what she's about and any and all products and servicesshe has created along with incredible free learning tools including video tutorials and many helpful articles.

MyOriginalEProducts.com - Limited resale rights offered each and every month. Don't compete with Tom, Dick, Harry, and the 10,000 other people who own the same old resale rights products. Make money by being one of the few to promote high quality resale rights products!

UndergroundMarketingStrategy.com - Now you can get several marketing strategies that will show you how to make money online. This site is devoted to teaching you proven ways to make money online, so that you can create multiple streams of income.

Easy Ebook Profit System - Learn the secret strategy that will teach you how to make at least $718.95 from each and every ebook you create!

WebsiteTrafficTraining.com - Getting traffic is the hardest part of doing anything online. Because of this, I have created a site that will show you several tactics driving traffic to your site quickly and easily!

MarketingForREALPeople.com - This is one of the biggest and best memberships online that gives video tutorials that show you how to start making money. You'll also get free coaching programs, video tutorials, access to interviews with top experts in Internet marketing and so much more.

TrainYourAffiliates.com - Creating a full time income with affiliate marketing is a wonderful way to make money. No products to create and no customer service. TrainYourAffiliates.com is dedicated to teaching you how to become a high earning affiliate.

TheEasyHomeBusinessSystem.com - If you're totally new to making money online this site will give you a free 300 page guide that will show you everything you need to know. All the way from site building and product creation to all the marketing tactics you need to know. It's totally free too...

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IMVideoLearningCenter.com - This site was created to teach you how to do all the necessary things you need to do to create a business online. So many people can't learn just from ebooks, so everything here is taught via easy to use video tutorials. This is great for hands on learners!

ReadyToGoEbookBiz.com - Have you ever wanted you very own product to sell, but have no idea where to start? Then this site is for you. We'll give you a product, setup your site to take payments, and even show you how to promote your product to start earning an income online quickly and easily.

Liz lives in Gates, TN with her husband and 5 (yes, F-I-V-E) kids. She runs her business along with her husband full time from her home.

Introduction:

This course discusses various search engine tools, what they can do, and whether they are effective.

That's because search engines have gone from being an interesting stop on the World Wide Web to the very lifeblood of countless net-based businesses.

Before we start looking at individual tools, let's take a moment to consider why mastering search engines is so incredibly crucial in the first place. That all starts with a basic understanding of how to succeed online.

In order to successfully operate an online enterprise, you need to have a few things in place.

First, there's the website. This is the page, or collection of pages, visitors will see. It will showcase the content designed to convince them to make a purchase or to undertake some other action designed to produce a profit for the webmaster.

Second, there's the means of monetization of that site. You have to have some way to make that website pay. You might be selling your own product or service. You could sell someone else's product as an affiliate, working for a commission. You might use your site as a kind of online billboard, displaying advertising that produce earnings based upon users' interaction with the ads.

For our purposes here, it doesn't matter what you do. It's just essential to note that you have to do something.

Finally, you need visitors. The greatest pages with the most spectacular offers are completely worthless if no one sees them. Online business lives and dies based on traffic.

Any traffic is better than no traffic at all, but targeted traffic represents the holy grail of Internet business.

Webmasters want to attract visitors with a specific interest in the kind of product or service being offered. If they can get that kind of "prequalified" visitor flow, it's much easier to log sales.

This is where we become interested in search engines. In fact, we become very interested. Search engines are an awesome means of delivering that top-notch targeted traffic.

It may be hard for us nowadays to imagine a web without search engines, but the development of the whole search engine phenomena is actually a relatively new development.

The Internet started as a disparate connection of individual sites. The connected with one another, forming a "web" by means of hyperlinks. One could hop around the net by surfing to and from various sites and following those links.

People are natural information organizers and more than one individual decided to start cataloging favorite links. Those hubs began to serve as popular starting points for those in search of information.

Those little lists may have been interesting, but they certainly failed to provide a comprehensive taxonomy. As the net began to expand, sites dedicated to serving a directory function appeared.

These human-edited projects sought to log new pages and to put them in a hierarchal organization pattern so that people could find what they needed in terms of information.

Then, it happened. The Internet began to reach a stage of critical mass. It began to grow incredibly fast. That's a trend that continues today. With rocket-fast development, it became painfully obvious that the human-edited directory was doomed as a comprehensive taxonomical resource.

There was simply no possible way even a large team of well-trained human editors and reviewers could keep up with new Internet additions.

The solution to this problem harkened back to the very original justification for computers -- automation. The driving force behind modern computers, starting with the earliest Univac systems, was the desire to automate time-consuming processes. This logic was applied to categorizing and cataloging the contents of the web.

How? Programmers developed scripts called "robots" that could scour the web, find new pages, and report back on them and their key elements in a way that would develop a directory alternative. That rudimentary model soon developed into what we now call a search engine.

The user sits at her keyboard in need of information. Not knowing where to start, she visits a search engine, types in her request, and receives a list of sites relevant to that search string.

Those search engine results are the by-product of robotic web scouring and a complicated algorithm designed to determine the content and value of individual

web pages. When the search engine does its job well, the visitor receives great leads on where to find the best information about their area of interest.

Early search engines weren't that great at serving up truly valuable results. It was a hit or miss proposition, to say the least. As time wore on, and experience mounted, the results gradually improved.

Although search engines are still far from perfect, they do a good enough job of connecting users with desired information that they've become the number one way by which surfers find sites today. No other means of exploration comes close.

That's why we're here right now, discussing search engine tools.

Online users go to search engines in droves looking for information. Search engines connect them with sites that have the information they want.

Search engines produce targeted traffic, the Webmaster's dream.

So, anyone who runs an online business recognizes (a) that he or she needs as much good traffic as he or she can get and (b) that search engines are the best way to secure the largest traffic stream.

Therefore, it pays to understand search engines and to work with them in a way that will get your site noticed and placed in front of people looking for information relevant to what you're offering.

If you sell widgets and can get listed on the first page of Google search engine results when people look for "widgets," you'll be in great shape. If you're on the second page, things won't be quite as good. If you're buried ten pages deep, few people will find you. If your site isn't indexed by the search engine at all, you're going to be lonely.

This SEO Authority course discusses a number of tools professionals use to work with search engines for maximum results as they seek as much search engine traffic as possible. Some of those tools are invaluable. Others are interesting, but not that valuable. Some may actually cause more damage than anything else.

Each search engine tool will be introduced with an eye toward explaining why it exists, instead of just outlining its use without any surrounding context. This should contribute to the reader's overall understanding of search engines and how they work, as well as to their knowledge about individual tools.

After the discussion of each tool, the course provides a brief concluding assessment of the tool's value.

We believe this course will give you a solid introduction to some of the most commonly mentioned search engine tools, but it is definitely not a survey of all the different ways you can generate free search engine traffic.

Understanding these tools will put you in the driver's seat, but if you'd like an additional map to traffic success, you will want to look at least one of the highly-recommended search engine strategy resources. Web Site Traffic Explained and its successor, Web Site Traffic Explained II, are **perfect instruction manuals** you can use to combine your understanding of how search engines operate and the tools we'll discuss here to reach even greater heights.

With a clear understanding of why we're here and why it all matters so much, let's get started.

Search Engine Auto-Submitter Software:

Automatic search engine submitters are, in many ways, a holdover from earlier days. Before the search engine business became the three-way race it is today (Google, Yahoo and MSN), there were scores of different search engines seeking market dominance.

Users might use any one of the many available search engines, so it was critical for webmasters to have as many search engines as possible take notice of their site.

Getting noticed in those earlier days wasn't always a matter of certainty. You often needed to tell the search engine that your site was out there to get their attention. That usually involved filling out a brief form featuring information about your site and its nature.

Those forms weren't that tough to complete, but it could become a rather tedious and time-consuming process with so many different search engines out there.

Recognizing the drive on the part of webmasters to achieve "saturation" across the whole range of search engines, programmers devised automatic submission tools that would list a site with a series of different search engines automatically.

At one time, that was a pretty valuable service. Using a submission tool could avert hours and hours of tedious work and could land a site on search engines the webmaster may have otherwise overlooked. Many webmasters saw automatic submission tools and services as a worthwhile investment.

Strictly speaking, there are still quite a few search engines out there. Although the industry is dominated by the three major players, there are other, lesser, engines in operation. Thus, there is still some base logical appeal to the idea of using a submission tool.

Even though it may seem intuitive to achieve saturated coverage using one of those tools, the truth belies that "common sense" assumption. In reality, these tools probably aren't worth the cost or effort today and may, in fact, backfire.

Why aren't they worth the effort any longer? There are a few reasons.

First, the minor search engines drive a very small percentage of overall traffic. In most cases, those small search engines have so few users that they don't produce any real discernible visitor flow.

If you can successfully find your way onto the "big three," there is little reason to care if you make it onto the more obscure search engines.

Second, the methods by which search engines discover sites has changed and improved considerably since the heyday of the automatic submission tool. When these options were at their peak of effectiveness, search engines relied heavily on direct webmaster interaction to discover sites.

If you didn't tell the engine that your site was out there, it might never find you.

That isn't the case today. Search engines use automated crawlers that weave their way through the web by use of published hyperlinks to make new discoveries and to then report back to the search engine.

If you have a site and you have a link from an indexed site somewhere else leading to it, even most of the smaller search engines will find you without the need for a "manual" submission. You can let the engines come to you instead of you going to them.

Third, search engines rely upon each other for information with greater frequency. One search engine may cull results from another, which may have gotten its information from another.

Chances are that if you can find your way onto the major search engines, the minor ones will find you without any additional effort.

Fourth, if a search engine is incapable of discovering you without a submission to them, chances are that it is of such low overall quality that it boasts few users and, thus, very little potential for traffic creation.

If a search engine is so outdated that it needs your tip, it probably doesn't deliver good enough results to attract a substantial user base.

We also mentioned that automated submission tools may actually have some additional 'negatives' associated with their use.

Let's consider some of those risks.

First, many automated submitters require your email address as part of the submission process. They supply that address to various "search engines" that are actually very little more than email collection devices.

You can bet your bottom dollar that submissions of this sort will do very little more than produce a slew of spam emails to your inbox.

Second, in order to increase their marketability in an environment that no longer requires their use, many submitters seek to impress potential customers with claims of substantial penetration. They may claim, for instance, that they'll get a site listed with hundreds of different search engines.

The problem is that there really aren't hundreds of search engines in play. Many of the submissions are made to sites that are little more than rarely (if ever) visited directory sites that have little or no value to the submitting webmaster.

Third, there is a school of thought that argues these submission tools are perceived as attempts to spam the search engines by the legitimate players. There is at least some likelihood that this perspective is correct and that submitting your site to the engines that do matter may actually slow the process of discovery and indexing.

Fourth, those who operate search engines will tell you not to worry about making a submission. The search engines may have a means by which you can submit a site, but they'll also tell you that as long as someone with an indexed site is linking to you, they'll find you without an invitation.

That makes sense. Search engines exist to broker the user/information arrangement. Their success is dependent upon putting users and the most relevant possible information together as efficiently as possible.

This means that the search engines have every reason to want to find your site as quickly as possible without reliance upon your assistance. They want maximum information and will go out of their way to discover sites in order to produce the best possible search results for users.

Automatic search engine submission tools are not necessary today. **They are not even recommended.**

There is a different school of thought, however. Some people will argue that there is little or no risk of negative impact stemming from the use of an automated submission tool and that broadcasting your site's arrival to as many other sites as possible does have some potential value.

You may get some traffic from the smaller and more specialized search engines, they argue.

Additionally, they maintain that the "big boys" may use the data from some of those smaller engines to help direct their own discovery processes. Thus, a listing at a small lesser-known search engine might end up resulting in Google indexing you faster.

In my estimation, those potential gains are relatively slight and don't serve as a justification to utilize an automatic submitting tool. As I said before, automatic search engine submission software is *outmoded* and no longer necessary.

Despite the fact these tools are outmoded, you'll see them advertised again and again. That can be more than a little frustrating for new marketers, who have to wonder how they can separate the "old" products that just don't work from the tools that really produce results.

Fortunately, there is information available that can help to prevent you from accidentally devoting effort to products and tools that are doomed to fail. One of the best places to start is be obtaining a comprehensive guide to the Internet marketing world that is constantly updated and that makes a point of assessing and reviewing new products and developments.

Recommendation: John Delavera's [Best Online Ebook](#) is an A to Z guide discussing all aspects of the IM business. This massive reference tool is particularly useful because Delavera makes a point of keeping it up to date at all times. If you're learning from the material in [Best Online Ebook](#), you don't need to worry about embracing outdated, non-working tools.

Section Assessment: Automatic search engine submission tools had their moment in the sun, but that moment has been over for some time. **Build good sites, make sure there are links from other established sites pointing to them, and let the search engines work their magic.**

There's no compelling reason to expend your valuable time or energy using automated submission tools now that the search industry has consolidated to three major players.

Search Engine Monitor Usage:

Search engine monitors have been around for years. Although they have matured and added features since their original appearance, we'll start our look at these tools by going back to the beginning.

One of the keys to running a successful online business is understanding the impact of your actions and tracking your progress. This is true in every area and is particularly true with respect to search engines.

You want good search engine rankings for the keyword phrases that describe your site's content. That desire leads you to take many different actions.

You may custom-tailor your content to rank for certain terms. You may engage in link development campaigns carefully designed to improve positioning. Your efforts will probably extend all the way to the HTML underlying your site (is your primary keyword phrase for each page wrapped in the H1 tag?). You get the idea.

You bend over backwards to get that coveted search engine ranking, and after all of the contortions you need to have some way of gauging your success.

That's the idea behind a search engine monitor.

A monitor like this will let you know how you're doing SEO-wise. It will tell you how well your ranking for various search strings across multiple search engines.

That is handy information to have. It's also information you can probably dredge up on your own. It wasn't always that way, though.

When we discussed the automated submission tools, we remembered the days when everyone from AltaVista to HotBot to Lycos was engaged in a battle royale for search engine supremacy. There were many different search engines and clear winners hadn't yet emerged.

Back then, the idea of tracking your progress across all of those different search engines wasn't too inviting because it was a long, tedious, grueling chore.

It isn't that time consuming to find out how you're ranking for your five primary keyword phrases on each of the "big three." Back when it was the "little fifty," however, it was a much more difficult project to undertake. That's why search engine monitors came into being. They'd check for you on all of those different search engines and then give you the results in nice, easy-to-follow layouts.

They were considered to be a diagnostic tool that could give you an idea of whether your search engine optimization techniques were paying off and they could save you a boatload of time.

Are these tools valuable in today's climate? You could argue that the crystallization of the search industry down to handful of major players has decreased the need for search engine monitor use. In many ways, that claim is true.

However, there is another side to the coin. Even though you may not need a tool to check across dozens of different search engines, the better monitor programs will give you a chance to check tons of keyword phrases and to find your rankings for each on all of the three major engines.

There are tools designed specifically for this purpose (we'll cover that more in depth in the Search Engine Ranking Tools section) that probably do a better job. And many of the search engine monitors available lack sufficient features to do this kind of work. However, if you have a monitor and it will perform that function, it can still be a time saver and a good way of finding out just how well (or poorly) your SEO efforts are faring.

Additionally, search engine monitors (unlike automatic submission tools) have matured over the years. The better ones aren't one-dimensional products that only provide information about rankings for specific terms. They've "grown up" and also serve up other important data.

A search engine monitor may give you information about backlink (these are links back to your websites) totals and locations, trend information and other valuable data so you can better plan your marketing strategies.

Do you need to use a search engine monitor? Probably not, in a purely traditional sense. That doesn't, however, mean that you should disregard these tools altogether as they may have value for some users.

Section Assessment: You can probably safely care less whether your site is listed on each of the hundreds of dinky little search engines that few people use. As such, you can probably live without regular use of a search engine monitor.

You can, however, get some extra mileage out of the otherwise antiquated device by using it as a search engine rankings tool if the version you have offers sufficient features.

Free SEO Tool: You can use [Search Engine Position Checker](#) to see how your site is doing for keywords on the bigger search engines.

Using Link Popularity Checkers:

A link popularity checker does just what you'd expect from the name. It scours the web to find instances of a particular link's use. If you own AwesomeWidgets.org and want to know how many sites link to you and where they are, you can use a link popularity checker to find out.

Why would you care? Just in case you aren't familiar with just how important that those links coming back to your site (often referred to as backlinks) are, let's take a moment to break it down.

Search engines rely upon proprietary algorithms to rank sites when people do their searches. They want to put the most relevant possible information in front of users when those users search for particular terms and the algorithm is designed to serve up the best sites first.

Those "secret formulae" take a number of different factors into account.

They look at things like the makeup of the content on the page, the age of the site, various aspects of the page's underlying coding and just about anything else you can think of. They also look at links. Actually, they almost stare at links.

Links are incredibly important.

Links have a unique station in the search engine ranking process for a reason. The search engines reason that sites boasting a number of links must have something worthwhile on them. They read links as "votes of confidence" in favor of the site and view sites with substantial incoming link totals as being authoritative.

They reward that standing with better search engine ranks.

Obviously, today's mad dash for great search engine results has led many sites to undertake a variety of methods to acquire backlinks in order to appear authoritative.

Some of those strategies work better than others, of course, but the search engines are always trying to tweak and improve their algorithms to stay one step ahead of the gamers.

No matter what happens, though, it appears as though links will have tremendous search engine optimization value for some time to come.

That's why people want to check up on their incoming links and why many make use of link popularity checkers.

A link popularity checker will report all discovered backlinks to a particular URL. It may also provide additional data including information about the linking pages in question, the anchor text used in the link and more.

The best link popularity checkers provide that information because it's more meaningful than just telling the user they have X number of links. Links from authority sites have more value than links from lousy sites and probably rarely or never seen online guest books.

The anchor text used in a link can have a massive impact on its ability to influence rankings for a particular keyword.

Powerful link checkers can also assist in the management of link-building campaigns that involve the reciprocal exchange of links. You can make sure your trade partners are upholding their end of the bargain.

There are freely available link popularity checkers available online. However, commercial versions of link checking software tend to provide more valuable data than do the online freebies.

Link popularity checkers tell you about the links your receiving and who's supplying them, but they don't tell you how to acquire the best possible links. It's up to you to integrate the data they supply with your own learning and experience to find the best ways of getting those essential links.

One way to do that is to take a lesson from the experts. For instance, the ebook [Search Engines Revealed](#) provides an expansive look at how to acquire great incoming links, as well as other proven tactics for improving your sites' search engine performance.

A rock solid guide like [Search Engines Revealed](#) can give you the background and understanding necessary to make the data supplied by tools like popularity checkers even more meaningful and valuable.

Section Assessment: People will forever debate whether content or links are "king" when it comes to SEO, but no one will dispute that links are essential to good rankings. That makes keeping a close eye on link popularity absolutely essential. Find a link popularity checker you like and with which you feel comfortable. You may not be using it every single day, but it will become an important part of your SEO Authority toolbox.

Free Tools: The [Free Link Popularity Service](#) offers an easy-to-use link popularity checker. [MarketLeap](#) also provides a free popularity tool that allows you to compare your site to others.

About Those META-Tags:

This course is about search engine tools more than it is about specific coding techniques. And although we won't focus too much on the various ways to tweak HTML for the sake of search engine optimization, we can't really discuss search engine tools without delving into a little coding with respect to meta tag creators.

Let's start by discussing what a meta tag is and what it does.

A meta tag is a piece of HTML code that provides information about the page upon which it appears. Most HTML tags exist to provide formatting instructions for the viewer's web browser. That isn't the case with meta tags.

As their name suggests, meta tags provide "higher level" information about the page. They might name the page's author, the date of page creation, and when the page was last updated.

Even more importantly, with respect to the search engine question, they may also contain meta keywords to indicate the subject matter of the page.

Meta tags are placed in the head of the document and are readable by search engines. And, as with so many things related to search engines, the role of meta tags has changed over time.

In early incarnations, search engines relied on meta tags to understand exactly what a page was about. In essence, they relied upon the webmaster's self-reporting of a page's content in order to categorize and rank it.

If your meta tags indicated your site was all about "blue widgets," many search engines would believe it -- even if the site was really all about "red widget removal."

Why would a webmaster deliberately mislead a search engine with meta tags? In the beginning, it didn't seem like they would. There really wasn't a substantial motivation.

As the search industry consolidated to a handful of major participants and overall search engine optimization shot through the roof, that began to change.

When people discovered all of the different ways by which they could reap a profit with websites, their motivation to 'game' the search engines grew, too.

Meta tags lost a degree of reliability. People were stuffing them with keywords or using keywords that really didn't match the page content in order to secure more visitors.

The story of search engine optimization is really a big cat and mouse tale. Search engines devise ranking algorithms. Then savvy Webmasters and SEO experts find ways to exploit those algorithms. The search engines tighten up their systems to try to prevent the gaming.

Every time the search engine cat stops one technique, the SEO mice are off and running, finding something else to exploit.

That's also the meta tag story. Many early search engines relied heavily on meta tags. Alta Vista, for example, seems to have been particularly enamored by those little chunks of HTML. It, and other search engines, used the tags both for database indexing and determining rankings.

In time, however, the search engines and their ability to interpret the full text of any given page improved considerably. The search engines didn't need to rely on the self-reporting of meta tags any more and that allowed them to put less stock in the often unreliable bits of code.

Meta tags are a likely place for misleading keyword use, but they can also contain valuable information. A perfect example of this are the various meta tags directing search engine robots to look (or not to look) at particular aspects of the page in question.

The value and use of the robot-related tags are beyond the scope of what we're trying to accomplish here, but they do have value and are definitely worth noting.

A **meta tag generator** is just a small software program (or script) designed to assist in the creation of these tags. Usually, the user is prompted to enter basic information and is then given the HTML code for the tags, which can then be placed in the page's header.

Meta tag generators are easy to use and placing the code within the page is a relatively simple proposition, too.

There is **a potential upside to using the right meta tags**. You may get some bump with some search engines based upon the keywords used within the tags.

Admittedly, the value of this strategy has declined dramatically over time as search engines have refined their algorithms for assessing page value, but every little bit helps. One can also use meta tags to serve other functions.

Overall, there is very little potential harm from using a well-constructed meta tag and some potential gain from doing so. As such, the use of meta tag generators still makes sense today.

You won't find your way to the #1 slot at Google for your competitive keyword phrases just because you have the right keywords in your meta tags.

You can't expect the use of a meta tag generator to propel you that much higher in the SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages) at any of the major engines.

However, it is a no-lose proposition with some potential benefit.

If the idea of playing around with actual code of your pages to improve search engine performance makes you a little uncomfortable, you aren't alone. After all, one of the most attractive things about Internet marketing is that you don't have to be a programming wizard to achieve great results.

You don't have to learn the ins and outs of HTML to turn huge profits with IM. You can rely on simple tools and honest guidance about the best ways to improve performance. Ebooks like the Internet Marketer's Guide to Free Traffic, for instance, explain how to put tools like the ones we're covering here into practical use.

The easy-to-follow instructions and expert guidance make it easier to produce results without forcing you to become a "nuts and bolts" programming wizard.

Chapter Assessment: If you hear someone talking about how they expect big results by adding meta tags to their pages, just laugh silently to yourself. The days where a well-built meta-tag could shoot one toward the top of the SERPs is a distant memory.

There are, however, a few search engines out there that may still have a lingering passion for the tags. There are also a few things you can do with meta tags to help your site. As long as you don't create an accidentally destructive meta tag (and that's tougher than you might think), risk analysis favors their use.

You might as well use a meta tag generator unless you would prefer to code the tags by hand… because that software sure makes it easier on you!

Free Tools: Free-Webmaster-Tools.com has a handy free meta tag generator that includes some basic instructions for robots. Submit Express also offers a free meta tag builder online for your convenience, as well.

You don't hear as much about doorway page generators these days as you did a few years ago. That's because so much has changed in the world of search engine optimization.

Doorway page generators are still available, however, so it makes sense to take a look at them and what they're all about.

Let's start with the obvious first step--explaining what a "doorway page" is.

A doorway page is a web page that has been optimized for maximum search engine friendliness for a particular keyword or keyword phrase.

The idea behind a doorway page is to create a page that will attract maximum search engine traffic and that will then give you a chance to direct the visitors to your main site.

Doorway page generators are programs that take information from the user and then produce optimized HTML for particular keywords.

Purveyors of these programs will maintain they produce output that is perfectly aligned with search engine expectations and algorithms for optimal results.

The programs usually feature a relatively simple interface into which the user will input basic information about the keywords targeted, the title of the page, description information, and the main page text. The program will then take that information and produce a page based upon the user's desired layout.

In essence, doorway page creators are really just page builders designed with search engines in mind.

They are beefed up with keyword analysis tools designed to help you find "soft spots" and to rank highly for high-traffic terms with little competition.

In many cases, you'll find doorway page creators packaged with automatic search engine submission tools.

Some of the page creators will even maintain that they can produce different versions of the doorway page designed to appeal to specific images.

The reason the two products seem to go hand in hand is because they are both products of the same age. They both came to prominence before the consolidation of the search industry and when there were scores of search engines vying for user attention.

We've already discussed the limited remaining value of search engine submission tools. Have doorway page creators suffered the same fate of obsolescence? In a word, yes.

Here's why a doorway page creator probably won't help you a bit.

First, they are generally based on a very simplistic understanding of what the search engines want. That's because they were built when search engine algorithms were less refined and more simplistic.

They may over-rely on meta-tags and may even utilize methods that the search engines will now view as illegitimate (such as keyword stuffing and white on white text).

Second, it makes much more sense to make sure each of your pages and the index page of your main site is optimized for peak performance. The doorway page logic was that you could create a separate high ranking page and use it to direct traffic to the rest of your site.

Why do that if you can make your site attractive to the search engines on its own accord?

Remember, the doorway page creation model stems from an era where webmasters felt a need to appeal to specific search engines and were convinced that what worked for one search engine wouldn't necessarily work with others.

Thus, there was some logical appeal to the idea of creating multiple doorway pages designed to appeal to specific search engines in order to snare traffic that could then be directed to your main site.

Today, the search engines all use different algorithms and undoubtedly weigh various factors differently, but there is no reason to believe you need specific pages distinct from your main site to appeal to each of them.

Third, better options exist. There are page builders and templates available that will construct quality pages with solid HTML coding and structure that are more flexible and that produce better results than old doorway page generators.

Finally, the doorway page strategy, as practiced, just doesn't work anymore. Search engines wizened up to the "click here to enter" doorway pages and the multiple mock-ups of look-alike pages and automatic redirects long ago.

To put it in perspective, during the research for this ebook we found an article talking about doorway pages and how Alta Vista was no longer falling for the trick and how many other search engines were following suit.

Many of you reading this ebook won't even remember the net back in the day when Alta Vista was a recognized player in the search field!

Doorway creation tools are a relic of the past. If you can get one free, it might be fun to look at in the same way a museum piece or other kitschy piece of retro could be.

You certainly wouldn't want to upload any of the pages you created using the tool, however.

Remember, **you will see many tools still being offered on the web that simply don't work any more**. The Internet is in a constant state of flux and search engines are constantly changing their approaches to websites. That's why it's so important to utilize resources like the [Best Online Ebook](#)."

You can acquire an even more holistic look at the Internet marketing business, what works, and what doesn't work with the [Best Online Ebook](#). It is perpetually updated and always covers the latest new ideas and changes, giving you a "living reference" to the IM business.

Section Assessment: Have you even remotely been thinking about using a doorway page generator? If so, try to come up with an appropriate punishment for yourself! ;-) **Seriously, doorway page generators are not a reasonable part of any modern and legitimate SEO strategy**.

Unless your time machine takes you back a decade, stay away from doorway page generators… they are NOT recommended in any way today.

Instead, concentrate your efforts on designing pages with solid HTML and great content. Then, go out and start collecting links to those pages. Let every page be a doorway to new information and returning visitors!

Search Engine Coverage Tools:

So far, we've discussed a number of tools with roots in the past that no longer serve much of a function today. Now, we'll look at another older notion. There's a twist this time, though, as the product may still have some value.

Search engine coverage tools are designed to let webmasters know which of their sites' pages are indexed and by whom.

Like some of the other tools we've discussed, search engine coverage tools date back to the days when a wider array of search engines were battling for supremacy and back before the "big three" emerged.

Back then, it was very important to be able to ascertain whether all of the various search engines were finding your pages. If you found holes in the coverage, you could then take steps to rectify the situation and to increase your site's exposure.

We've been relatively dismissive of some of the other search engine tools from this "older generation," and you might think the same arguments that de-emphasize reliance on those techniques would similarly apply to search engine coverage tools. In some ways, they do. In others, however, they don't.

Yes, it is true that you really don't need to care if your site appears on each and every one of the dinky, seldom-used search engines in the world. You can also be relatively certain that if one of the big boys has found you the others have, too. Either that or they very soon will.

The idea of there being significant coverage gaps among those search engines that matter seems pretty unlikely these days.

So, why shouldn't we throw in the towel completely on search engine coverage tools? **Because they do something else** for you.

These tools don't just check to see if the main site has been indexed by various search engines. **The better ones allow you check on individual site pages for indexing.** It's that part of the system that imbues these tools with some residual value.

Increased competition and a heavy reliance upon content by webmasters seeking top SERPs has led to the creation of many larger sites.

Whereas a twenty page site was once considered quite large, it would be an excruciatingly small site by today's standards. Many sites consist of thousands of pages these days.

The question for webmasters who are operating these bigger sites is whether he or she can **maximize the value of each and every single page**.

Sometimes, for any one or more of a variety of reasons, an individual page escapes indexing by the search engines. Although that page may still have some profit potential via links from other pages within your site or elsewhere, its overall propensity for success is limited by its failure to appear in the search engine databases.

A good search engine coverage program will enable you to uncover individual pages within your larger sites that haven't been indexed.

You can then take appropriate action to make sure those "missed" pages find their way into the search engines.

A search engine coverage tool won't do you a lot of good in some respects. I mean, really, how interested are you in whether or not your site appears on search engines that no one really uses?

In other senses, the technology behind the search engine coverage tools can be leveraged to your advantage by showing you the pages of your sites that have avoided search engine discovery and giving you a chance to make sure they get noticed.

Search engine coverage tools aren't the most important part of your collection, but **when used the right way they can have some value** to the modern webmaster.

We've already discussed a handful of tools that deserve a spot in your collection and a couple you should avoid. If you are beginning to wonder whether you'll be able to make the best decisions about how to approach other aspects of your projects, too, you should consider a proven, step-by-step approach to designing IM strategies that work.

[Internet Marketing Cookery](#) is a "cookbook" designed to produce some very tasty (profitable) results. It provides recipes any would-be IM chef can follow and can help remove some of the confusion from IM. **It's a great way to get a clear understanding of how to build a workable product using tested systems**.

Section Assessment: Seriously, you certainly do need to know that the big three are reading your sites, but **you don't need to be all consumed with trying to obtain saturation of all existing search engines**. You could take up

all the traffic the minor engines would send your way, multiply it by ten, and you still wouldn't notice the flow relative to what the big boys would be sending.

Plus, if the search engine is good enough to bother with, it's going to find you through links.

These tools were all the rage back when you didn't know who would be using what search engine. Things have calmed down these days and the once raging search engine wars have been replaced by a "cold war" with three easy-to-identify participants.

Concentrate on them and don't worry about making #1 at the 'little guy engines'. And now we're going to tackle that elusive Page Rank from Google… which is better known as Google PR.

Using A Page Rank Tool:

Page Rank is a frequently misunderstood concept and rumors are constantly swirling about regarding its meaning, value and use. Before we examine some of the Page Rank tools and what they do, let's take a good look at what Page Rank is really all about.

Page Rank is a concept uniquely tied to Google. Every page has a Google Page Rank that ranges from zero to ten.

Google claims that Page Rank represents the importance of the page relative to the rest of the web.

Google uses a host of different factors to determine Page Rank. As with all Google algorithms, the exact nature of the system used to determine Page Rank remains a proprietary secret that Google won't share.

Most experts agree that involves an overall assessment of multiple factors including the quality and quantity of inbound links, on page SEO and the nature of the individual page's content.

You might assume that Page Rank is closely tied, then, to search engine rankings. That assumption, however, isn't necessarily true.

There are thousands of pages with a Page Rank (PR) of zero that rank higher for certain keyword terms than do sites with much higher PR. It is not uncommon to find PR3 and PR4 sites that significantly outperform PR5 or PR6 sites!

The idea of being able to assess a page's quality or value based on a single digit is intoxicating, but it just doesn't work out that way. **PR actually tells us very little about how a page is actually performing.**

Google employee Matt Cutts has warned webmasters not to "obsess" over PR. He says that of the over one hundred different factors Google looks at to determine search engine results, PR is just one of them--and it certainly isn't the definitive one of the bunch.

Others argue that PR does have some value, but not in the way many novice onlookers tend to anticipate.

Some people argue that PR is used to help Google determine its indexing pattern. Sites with higher PR, they say, get re-indexed and analyzed faster than those with lower PR.

PR may also help determine how closely Google's robots will analyze a site. You might be able to anticipate a deeper dig on the part of the Googlebots if your site has a higher PR.

There are some who maintain that PR really only becomes a factor when all other things are approximately equal. The "tiebreaker" school of thought maintains that if two sites are relatively equally deserving of a spot in the SERPs for a particular search, the higher PR site will get the nod.

No matter which way you look at it, it doesn't appear as though PR is the most important consideration when working with Google.

However, **PR does have some value** and there's a reason so many people watch it so carefully.

First, it does provide some idea of how Google feels about your site. You can feel relatively safe that you're on Google's good side if you have a high PR. Likewise, the failure for a site to ever gain PR may be indicative of a problem.

Second, it is a tangible representation of site quality. The reason PR is so popular is because it distills a great deal of information into single digit. Although it is an obviously imperfect measure of value, it is something.

That's one reason why PR is discussed so frequently. SEO experts want to see the sites with which they are working gain PR as a means of demonstrating progress to their clients and as a way of assessing their own efforts.

PR is also frequently used among webmasters as a way to assessing the value of text links.

If you are buying or selling text links, you can be relatively certain that the PR of the site in question will be used as an important factor in determining pricing.

So, with that in mind, **let's look at the different types of Page Rank tools**.

The simplest tool is one that will tell you the Page Rank of any given URL. There are a few different ways to do that. Some sites offer free PR tools. You simply type in the URL about which you are curious and it will show you that page's current PR. In some cases, these tools check the PR with each of Google's several data centers to provide as much information as possible.

Today, it isn't as necessary to use a distinct site to determine PR as it once was. That's because of Google Toolbar, a browser add-on that improves functionality and includes a handy meter showing the PR of every site one visits.

Google Toolbar is available for both Internet Explorer and Firefox. It's the easiest way to instantly see the PR of any site you might be visiting.

A second kind of Page Rank tool is the PR predictor. The idea here is simple. You type in the URL about which you are interested. The script then tells you its current PR and what you can expect in terms of PR through the future.

The reliability and value of predictive PR tools is questionable, at best. Anecdotally, many maintain that these predictors fail far more often than they make a successful prediction.

Peering into a PR crystal ball may be fun, but you certainly don't want to make any decisions based upon what you see!

A third PR tool is the fake detector. Some people have learned how to artificially (and misleadingly) increase their PR.

This is usually done to help puff up the sales price of a site by dishonest domain brokers or to justify the request of higher payments from advertisers who may be interested in the placing ads on the site.

These tools analyze a site to **determine its true PR** at any given time.

Page Rank is a very interesting phenomenon. There have been hundreds of thousands of words devoted to unraveling the meaning and value of PR, but no one is sure. Those in the best position to know and understand the value of PR only say that it isn't worth being too worried about.

No matter what value you ascribe to PR, it's always interesting to keep an eye on it and that's easy to do with readily available tools. However, it is always even more important to focus on developing great content and as many strong inbound links as possible.

You should definitely spend more time reading and understanding something like Jack Humphrey's Power Linking than you should tracking the occasional changes of site's PR.

A serious set of directions on how to build incoming links is worth far more than a tool that will tell you whether your site is at PR4 or PR5!

Section Assessment: **Check your Page Rank**. Celebrate increases. Bemoan declines. And all the while, know that you really aren't sure what it all means.

Page Rank is indicative of something, but no one really knows of what. The "importance" rating doesn't necessarily comport with search engine results or anything else other than the asking price for text links, it seems.

It is probably safe to say that if your PR is up there in the stratosphere that you are doing something right. Don't be too concerned if it doesn't creep up there, though. **Keep your eyes on the prize: traffic**.

Free Tools: The Google Tool Bar (this link is for the Firefox browser, but IE is also available, along with several others) is an **absolutely free browser add-on** that will show you the PR of every site you visit. CheckPageRank.com allows you to find the PR for any URL without installing a tool bar.

The Duplicate Content Controversy:

One of the constantly raging search engine optimization debates surrounds how the engines interpret and react to content that appears on multiple websites.

There is a common perception that original content is always preferable to material published elsewhere. There is evidence that suggests search engines punish (or at the very least, don't reward) sites that rely upon duplicated content.

That would be a logical approach for search engines. Imagine an article titled "The Best Widgets." It was published on the web with express consent from the author to republish it elsewhere.

There is such a demand for widget-related information that many different webmasters decide to place the article on their sites. Before you know it, "The Best Widgets" appears on literally hundreds of different pages.

Now, suppose a user sits down in front of her computer, looking for information on the best available widgets. She goes to Google and queries "the best widgets."

Which printing of that great widget article should be on top? Should the original publisher get the top slot or should it go to the most overall authoritative site using the content?

Furthermore, **how many times should the search engine even bother listing the same article?**

Remember, our user wants to get the best possible information on the best widgets available. She doesn't want to waste her time visiting scores of sites only to find the identical text.

Search engines, as we've noted repeatedly, exist to bring users together with the best possible, most relevant information. If a search engine is merely showing the same thing in a hundred different places, it isn't providing a top-notch user experience and is setting itself up for eventual ruin.

So, the search engines have to find a way to avoid over-listing the same content and they need a way to determine which copy of an article will appear at the highest SERP slot among all copies.

There is a great deal of speculation about how that's done. Many people argue that Google and other search engines actively penalize those who are reliant upon duplicate content. They say that the search engines downgrade duplicate pages, hiding them deep in the SERPs where they are rarely found.

Some claim duplicate pages may not even be indexed by the search engines at all.   Many widely varied opinions exist about this.

There are also many opinions on how the search engines break "ties" when it comes to duplicate content. Some say they defer to the site with the greatest overall authority for the first listing spot. Others argue that the first site to have the material indexed wins the prize.

This course is about search engine tools. Even though some understanding of search engine behavior is necessary to assess the value of those tools, we aren't really interested in determining the exact behavior of Google on every front.

So, instead of trying to solve the duplicate content penalty with certainty, let's just work from a fairly non-controversial foundation: You're better off with original content than you are with duplicate content.

That raises another series of questions, chief among them what constitutes duplicate content?

Again, opinions are diverse.

Some will say that duplicate content penalties only adhere in the case of wholesale page duplication. Others claim the duplicate content filtering process is more refined than that and that pages with content substantially similar to already-indexed pages will suffer.

Regardless of which perspective you take, it's certainly not worth gambling with substantial use of content that appears elsewhere.

That fact has led to the creation of some interesting tools and techniques. Many webmasters employ article "spinning" software that reorganizes the sentences and paragraphs to make the content different from what was input into the software, or they hire people to take existing material and alter it enough to appear like a new 'original', for instance.

That can be a legitimate method of averting duplicate content issues when the webmaster has the full private label rights to the content in question.   When that isn't the case, however, even a "spun" article may run afoul of copyright regulation.

Plagiarism and copyright concerns are another reason why duplicate content receives so much attention.

Consider this scenario: You spend hours writing an article you title, "Five Ways to Fix a Widget." It's an absolutely brilliant article and provides information that is in high demand.

You're undoubtedly excited about the attention it will receive and how much it will help your site in terms of user experience and traffic.

Then, one day, you discover that **your material** is being used on someone else's page. They aren't crediting you for the article. They aren't even giving you the courtesy of a backlink. They just **stole your words and are using them as your own**. It happens every day!

That kind of plagiarism can be very destructive to the interests of the original publisher. If it happened to you, you'd want to make every effort to have the other site take down the stolen material so that your ability to prosper from it isn't compromised any further.

Copyright and plagiarism issues can be complicated and this course certainly isn't designed to serve as a copyright primer. For our purposes, **we simply need to recognize that duplicate content can represent a rights infringement** that opens the door for all sorts of undesirable fallout, including legal entanglements.

It cuts both ways, too. Suppose you hired a new ghostwriter to supply you with an article about widgets. You receive it, like it, and publish it. A few weeks later, you receive an angry email from its true original writer. You may have been engaging in copyright infringement without even knowing it and that could expose you to legal liability, a takedown of your site pursuant to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, or other hardships and unpleasantries.

Thus, we can reasonably argue that **using duplicate content has both ethical and legal risks associated with it** and that it makes sense to make sure any content you will be using on your site is original, unless you have the expressed consent of the rights holder or have rights to the material.

Now that we've discussed why duplicate content is problematic, it's natural to wonder how to find it and to avoid problems. That's where **duplicate content checkers** enter the picture.

The difficulties associated with the phenomena fueled the creation of several tools designed to scour the web for duplicate content as a means of protecting webmasters from unscrupulous plagiarists.

The most famous of the duplicate content checkers is Copyscape.
Copyscape provides a free service wherein a webmaster can submit any URL and find all other (if any) pages on the web featuring the same content.

It's a good means of finding out whether you have the original stuff and/or if others have misappropriated your content.

Other duplicate content checkers are also available. Their level of sensitivity and the scope of their search for duplicate materials vary.

Copy checkers are a great way to avoid problems with duplicate content. They may not be perfect, but in the absence of an alternative, they can do a good job of providing whether material lies elsewhere on the web, too.

All webmasters should have at least one quality duplicate content checker at their disposal. They should <u>use the tool</u> to make sure that they are not being victimized by plagiarists. They should use it to check any third-party content against the rest of the web, too.

You should also learn everything you need to know about the various kinds of rights involved in the online content trade and what they mean to you as an Internet marketer. You don't need to be a copyright attorney to handle IM rights questions, but you most certainly do need to have a clear understanding of many important related issues.

John Delavera's [All Rights Explained](#) is the perfect primer for those who are serious about avoiding disaster and posting huge earnings online. It provides everything one needs to know to [stay on the right side of rights controversies](#).

Section Assessment: **You <u>don't</u> want to spend money on stolen content**. You don't want to see yourself slip down in the SERPs because that "fresh" article has actually been around since animated GIFs were popular.

You also want to **make sure that some competitor isn't robbing you blind**.

Check for duplicate content. **Stay on the safe side and use original materials whenever possible.**

Free Tools: The best free tool for checking duplicate content is [Copyscape](#). You may also want to take a look at [Webconfs.com's free similar pages checker](#).

Outbound Link Checkers:

So far, our discussion of links has centered upon receiving and not giving. That's because every inbound link helps you. Well, some really weak ones may not help much, but they certainly don't hurt.

Let's look at the other side of the story for a moment. **Outbound links are the links that lead your visitors off to other parts of the web**. These outbound links can have an impact on your search engine results placement.

We aren't talking about the common mistaken novice assumption that you can somehow grab some power and importance by linking to a great site. It doesn't work that way. The search engine recognizes your vote of confidence for the site to which you are linking and rewards it for the link. It doesn't provide you with any material compliment for your own good taste.

You see, **outbound links can't really help you that much**. They can, however, hurt you.

Let's return to our earlier discussion about the value of links. Links are read as votes of confidence from one site to another. That's great when you are making solid recommendations to good sites. But what do you think the search engines will think about you if you are linking to bad sites.

They might just downgrade you.

We aren't talking about links to bad sites in the sense that the site has nothing but bad poetry and few pictures of someone's pet cat. That might be a bad site, but it isn't the kind about which you need to worry. We're talking about the kinds of bad sites Google and other search engines really hate.

They're often called "bad neighborhoods". And you can get penalized for linking to them.

What is a bad neighborhood? It might be a site that's recognized as a home base for spamming efforts. It might even be a site engaged in illegal activities. It could be the kind of site that loads up visitors' sites with unwelcome programs. Google has been known to treat sites that use "black hat" SEO methods as part of bad neighborhoods, too.

The basic rule of thumb is that it's fine to link to reputable sites, but **it's a lousy idea to link to sites of questionable integrity**. Google will ban sites like those and they will then punish those who have been giving them a vote of confidence along the way.

That seems easy to avoid. You just won't knowingly link the bad guys, right? Good plan. Unfortunately, that might not be enough.

What if you link to a site with a great list of free search engine tools. Now, suppose that one day the owner of that site transfers the domain to someone else who reconfigures the site into "Bob's House of Illegal Pornographic Materials and Spam?"

You're linking to that horrible site. You're giving that filth a vote of confidence. Now that once great outbound link is obviously no longer a good idea.

So, **what you need is an outgoing link checker**. This tool will run through all of your URLs outbound links and report back if it finds any known banned sites or sites that appear to contain questionable content. It isn't necessarily foolproof, but it is a good way to prevent an unintentional penalty for your accidental link out to a bad neighborhood.

It might not seem fair for the search engines to punish you for something another site decided to do, but it can happen. Even if you were wholly convinced that you were linking to a good site, Google can punish you if the target of that link decides to engage in some bad behavior! That's just one of the many search engine idiosyncrasies many people overlook.

The best way to avoid making mistakes like that is to continue to build your knowledge base with respect to the ways search engines work and how they'll approach your sites.

Expert overviews of these topics, like the one provided by [Search Engines Revealed](#) can help you secure free traffic while allowing you to avoid the traps into which others fall.

Section Assessment: **Don't link to the bad guys on purpose and do your best not to link to them by accident, either**. Take a look at your outbound links with some regularity just to make sure you aren't giving a vote of confidence to someone who most certainly doesn't deserve it.

If you have many outbound links or if you deal in a niche that might leave you prone to accidentally linking to a bad neighborhood, use an outbound link checker to make sure your hands are clean.

Free Tools: [LinkVendor](#) offers an easy-to-use free outbound link checker.

Using Spider Simulators:

Search engines use "spiders" to crawl the web. These intricately designed software programs scour the Internet accumulate data, and report back to search engine data centers. Before a site can even be indexed with a search engine, a spider has to find it.

When a spider does find a page, it can only report the information it finds. Some elements of pages, and some whole pages, can nearly invisible to search engine spiders.

This can create a problem for webmasters who want to be sure their pages are discoverable by search engine users.

Flash content, javascript materials, images and other data may be ignored by spiders and a page with poorly structured HTML may result in a spider making an incomplete assessment of a given page.

A search engine spider simulator gives the webmaster an opportunity to see his or her page through the eyes of a search engine robot.

One merely supplies the page or its URL to the simulator, which then provides a report about how the spider will approach its content and what it will actually find.

These simulators also show the links on the page that the spider will then follow after accumulating on-page data.

Search engine spider simulators are **a potentially valuable research**. If you find individual pages that don't seem to be getting the right attention from search engines -- or that aren't being indexed at all -- you can use the simulator to troubleshoot the problem.

A spider simulator can also help you to be certain your pages are using an optimal structure. Problems discovered by search engine spider simulators can educate you about how to better adjust existing pages and build new ones.

Do you need to run each and every page you create through a simulation? No. However, it does make sense to **test your new templates** against a spider simulator if you plan on using them for multiple pages.

It's also a great way to assess what might be happening with your "problem" pages.

Section Assessment: These are safe tools. You aren't really manipulating or creating anything, so nothing can go wrong when you use a spider simulator.

Meanwhile, you are getting a Google-eye view of what your pages look like, which is **a wonderful diagnostic opportunity**.

Now, the value of a spider simulator is going to correlate directly with your ability to interpret what you see. If your SEO expertise is at zero, the information you glean probably won't help you too much (except in more egregious cases where spiders behave as if your page is invisible). However, as your experience and knowledge base grows, the data can become more valuable and meaningful.

Free Tool: Webconfs.com has a simple search engine spider simulator that requires nothing more than your URL to get started.

Google Site Maps & Site Map Tools:

You will most definitely want all of the great information in your site indexed by Google, the biggest of the three search engines. You don't want pages to be accidentally ignored or only partly discovered by the search giant, because you want maximum traffic from its huge user base.

We just discussed how we might be able to use a search engine spider simulator to help in that respect. We can find out how the Googlebots might see our site in order to make sure it's easy to find all of out great content in hopes of being subsequently rewarded with a visitor stream.

There is another way to accomplish that same goal and to do an even better job of it. The opportunity is unique to Google, but considering just how significant Google is with respect to searches, it's still something everyone should consider.

It's called a site map, and creating a site map for Google is a great idea.

Google's Site Map system allows you to create an XML file that lists all fo the URLs for a given site. It also allows you to provide additional information to Google about each of the site's URLs.

You can let Google know how often you update each page, how important each URL is in relation to others and more. This gives Google the ability to instruct its spiders on the best way to examine your site.

Instead of endlessly tweaking our code in order to give the spider a perfect view, we can shortcut the process by creating a site map and letting Google handle the bot instruction process.

This is a valuable asset for many sites, particularly "thicker" ones with a great deal of content or archived material that may not be readily apparent from the main index page. A search spider may not find all of those other great pages, but if you tell Google where they are and how to get to them, you can improve their chances of eventual indexing considerably.

Sitemaps are not, however, a cure all. You can't give Google a site map as a replacement to their usual crawling. You are providing helpful supplemental information, but Google isn't giving you the keys to their robots!

Submitting a site map does increase the likelihood of indexing, but it does not have an impact on the way Google will actually assess the value of any individual page. So, don't think that providing a site map will suddenly make your index

page jump up in the SERPs. It's about indexing, a prerequisite to ranking, but not about ranking improvement itself.

Google does provide some instruction on how to create a site map, but it can be a somewhat confusing process for the novice webmaster. As a result, third parties have created site map construction tools to make the process easier.

You can use one of these tools to generate a site map that you can then pass on to Google.

The learning curve associated with building a site map yourself is not insurmountable. You do not have to rely on a third party tool to get the job done if you are willing to invest some time and thought to the process. Using a tool may be more efficient for some users, however.

The site map can be a very helpful tool in and of itself, and site map generator tools can be a handy tool with which to build the other tool! Sound confusing? It's not really all that bad.

Neither is building a site map and giving it to Google. It's one of those moves that has some real potential value in terms of comprehensive indexing and that carries little, if any, risk of problem.

Section Assessment: Google, the biggest of the search engines, is willing to let you give its robots a few hints about how to index your page. There's no compelling reason to pass up an opportunity like that.

If you can't build your own XML site map for Google, you can use a third party tool do the job for you.

Google site maps and the tools associated with them are a little more complicated than some fo the tools we've discussed here, but they can be valuable--particularly if your site features a strange design or has masses of content.

Giving Google the right information is just one way to tap into more free search engine traffic. The Internet Marketers Guide to Free Traffic supplies many other techniques and discusses how you can use a variety of tools to get more visitors.

Free Tool: XML-Sitemaps offers an easy site map creator. You provide some basic information and it will build your map.

Backlink Text Analyzers:

Earlier, we discussed the importance of links to the process of search engine optimization and traffic attraction.

Links have long been a chief means by which search engines assess the value and authority of your pages and play a substantial role in determining the eventually positioning of your pages in search engine results.

There are **a few different factors at play** with respect to assessing backlinks to your site.

Quantity, of course, is important. If you have a large number of inbound links, that will work to your advantage.

Quality, understandably, is also important. If an authoritative site is linking back to you, that link will be interpreted by the search engines as having greater value than a link from a little-known, non-authority site.

Theme is another consideration. The search engines don't want to be fooled by intentional efforts at developing a collection of backlinks.

Logically speaking, sites that deal in topics and themes similar to your own should be more likely to link to you than sites on unrelated subject matters. Thus, links from similarly themed sites are usually preferred.

Finally, **anchor text** is evaluated. If people are linking to you using a particular expression, your site will begin to rank more highly for that keyword phrase.

Backlink text analyzers provide information about this important component of the linking factor.

One of the most famous examples demonstrating the importance of "anchor" text and search engine results is the word "failure." If you Google the word "failure," the first result will be the official Whitehouse biography of President George W. Bush.

That happens because those in the search engine optimization and Internet community intentionally started a link campaign to the bio using the anchor text "failure" to demonstrate the value of anchor text while simultaneously expressing discontent with the Administration's policy.

This kind of "Google bombing" has been successfully accomplished with other terms, as well.

It may seem like more of a joke than an important part of the search engine puzzle, but the "failure" experiment and other similar tests do reveal the importance of anchor text.

A President's biography (which doesn't even include the word "failure") ranks number one for the term. The only explanation are those links with the "failure" anchor text.

A backlink text analyzer allows you to search for all links coming toward the page of your choice. It will show you those links and their location, along with the anchor text used in the links.

Let's say you are attempting to crack the first page of search engine results at Google for the expression "used widget dealer." One of the best ways to creep toward the top slot would be to have many different links using the expression pointing at you.

The backlink text analyzer will let you know whether that is happening or if people are linking to you using appreciably different terminology.

An analyzer has value as **a means of assessing search engine optimization campaigns** for particular terms. It also has some value in terms of understanding who is linking to your site and why.

Additionally, you might notice that although people aren't using the term "used widget dealer," they are using the anchor text "used widget supplier" in greater numbers than you might expect.

Combining that information with the right keyword research may show you a way to make a few adjustments to your pages or strategies to capture a higher ranking for "used widget supplier" with less effort than you might have thought.

A good backlink text analyzer is a nice tool for any webmaster to have at his or her disposal.

Section Assessment: If nothing else, you'll be able to find out if some nefarious gang of rivals is trying to make you number one for "loser."

Backlink text analyzers are valuable tools. They give you important information about whether your targeted anchor text linking campaign strategies are working while simultaneously showing you how others are approaching your site. Take a look at your backlinks with a text analyzer occasionally.

Free Tool: Webconfs.com offers a freely available [backlink anchor text analysis tool](#).

Tools For Backlink Building:

We've talked a great deal about backlinks and just how important they can be in terms of search engine optimization. When discussing backlink text analyzers, we looked at the various components of linking that play a role in how search engines value links. Thematic relationship was one part of the puzzle.

Remember, you don't <u>just</u> want links. **You want the best possible links in order to make the most progress with respect to the search engines**. That means finding ways to develop backlinks with similarly themed sites, among other things.

A backlink building tool can help you find similarly-themed places where you may be able to secure a link back to your site.

A backlink builder tool allows you to **input the niche keyword** in which you have an interest. It then searches the web for sites using that same keyword that also evidence a propensity to become a backlink source.

That's accomplished by searching for different expressions indicating that the site is interested in linking to other sites. The backlink builder, for instance, may look for sites with phrases such as "Add URL" or "Add a Link" and other similar expressions.

When it finds keyword matches that also appear to have link invitations, it reports them. The webmaster can then visit those likely prospects in an effort to secure links.

In some cases, it might be as easy as filling out a form. In other cases, it may require a reciprocal link to get one from the thematically-related site. Sometimes the site builder may find paid link opportunities.

Basically, a backlink finder is a relatively blunt instrument. It won't reveal all potential link partners and its ability to discover related sites may be less than perfect, too.

However, a tool like this can give you an interesting way to explore potential new link sources.

Obviously, manual link trading and link development campaigns can be rather time-consuming, especially if you are working toward search engine domination for a high-competition keyword.

If that's your situation, a backlink building tool may not make a great deal of sense.

However, **if you are trying to add a fistful of tightly-themed links back to your site** and aren't in a position where you need thousands of backlinks to be competitive, it may be worth your time to explore potential link sources using a backlink building tool.

It's important, however, not to let the name fool you**. A backlink building tool provides you with information about how to build links** -- it won't actually go out there and increase your inbound link total! In order to get the most out of linking and to acquire an awesome stockpile of backlinks, you need to combine information like that provided by tools with know-how.

Jack Humphrey's [Power Linking](#) is a great way to develop the knowledge base that will allow you to optimally utilize many of the tools we're discussing here.

Section Assessment: These tools don't offer precision focus and they don't create massive opportunities for link growth. They are what they are.

However, **if you accept them for exactly what they are, they can be a fun tool**. It may be worth a few minutes to seek out some thematically-related sites to your own that could serve as home for a good backlink.

Using a backlink building tool is unlikely to change things for you drastically, but it could do some good and there really isn't much of a downside except for the minimal time investment required.

Free Tool: Another great free tool from Webconfs.com is their [backlink builder](#). You supply the keyword and the tool will search the web for potential link partners. Then it's up to you to follow through and contact those potential backlink partners.

Keyword Density Checkers:

Keyword density is one of those topics that seems quite simple on its face, but is actually more complicated once one begins to start digging.

Let's start with the most basic definition of the concept of keyword density. Keyword density is usually expressed as a percentage and refers to the percentage of time a given keyword or keyword phrase is used within the text of a piece of content.

For instance, if we are talking about the keyword "widget" and your article is 500 words long, using the term 3 times, the keyword density is at 6% for the that turn. 3/500 = .06.

So, the mathematical expression of the concept is simple and it's easy to understand what keyword density means. The bigger question is why it might matter.

As you've no doubt gathered, one of the biggest parts of SEO is building a site that will rank effectively for frequently used keyword searches. One way of doing that is to make sure the keyword in question is used on the page.

Although you can rank for terms you don't use (remember our "failure" example, for instance), it is much easier to make your way up the SERP ladder if you are using your keyword within your content.

Before search engines became more nuanced in their approach, webmasters could often rank for terms by stuffing their meta tags with keywords and using the term repeatedly on the page.

As people realized that and tried to exploit the search engine's weakness in that regard, the search engines changes their method of page assessment. They didn't just look to see if a given keyword was used on the page. They also began to check for its apparent legitimacy.

The days of keyword spamming are over. If you think putting the term "widget delivery" on your page eight hundred times will help you rank for the term, you are dead wrong. Not only will it not help, it can actually hurt.

The search engines may interpret the keyword stuffing as an intentional effort to spam the engine and may punish the site with lower rankings.

The search engines aren't just looking for use, you see. They are looking for natural use. Of course, they are relying upon a programmed robot to discern natural use, which is an inherently flawed methodology on some level.

Still, the algorithms have been tweaked to prevent the search engines from falling for genuinely spammy efforts.

So, how can we make sure the search engines notice our use of the keywords in which we are interested without making them think we are trying to pull a trick on them?

That's the question that keyword density analysis attempts to determine.

Adherents to the keyword density school of thought tend to think that one will receive optimal treatment from a search engine when the keyword is used at a particular density level.

Assessments of the optimal level vary a great deal depending upon whom one wants to believe. You may hear recommendations running from as low as 2% to as high as 10%.

You might think that by now people would be relatively certain of the optimal keyword density and may wonder why the recommended ranges vary so much. The answer to that question lays in the stunning fact that search engines don't actually look at keyword density.

Keyword density has a number of shortcomings in the eyes of search engine experts. It's easy to "game" in an effort to get higher rankings. Appropriate use levels of a term will vary based upon the context in which it used. There are other challenges, as well.

So, the search engines don't look at keyword density. They actually rely upon much more complicated matrices and concepts to assess content, including term vector analysis and latent semantic indexing.

Those tools aren't quite as blunt as good ol' keyword density and they do a better job of protecting the search engines from spammy attempts to climb the SERPs and provide more accurate assessments of page composition.

Unfortunately, they are also complicated propositions and aren't the kind of thing most webmasters can readily use themselves to test the quality of their pages in the eyes of the search engines.

Keyword density, on the other hand, is easy to calculate and there does seem to be sufficient data to suggest at least some level of correlation between keyword density and the more complicated findings and analysis of search engines.

Thus, people continue to use keyword density. It's an imperfect measurement, to say the least, but it is a measurement and it does provide at least some potentially valuable information about your pages.

A keyword density checker assesses the total size of a given page and the number of incidences in which a particular keyword is used. It then provides the keyword density for that term.

What does that mean for webmasters? Well, as long as the keyword density falls between the expected recommended range, one probably won't run into problems.

If, however, the keyword density checker reveals a substantial overuse of a particular term, that may be a call for alarm. The search engines might be interpreting that substantial use as a form of keyword stuffing and may penalize the offending page, even if no harm was meant.

Keyword density tools can help you to make sure your desired terms are showing up on your page enough. They can also tell you if they are showing up too often to be safe.

Remember, the search engines use machines to assess data quality, a very human function. They are constantly updating algorithms to check for natural language and quality content.

As such, it probably makes more sense to build pages with the search engines' goals in mind rather than tying to build them to comport with the algorithm, which is constantly changing.

Remember how we said that most keyword density recommendations fall between the 2% and 10% ranges? It just so happens that natural human language tends to fall into that same range.

If you are creating legitimate content, there is a very strong likelihood that your keyword density for critical terms will naturally fall within the range usually thought to be safe without any outside help.

A keyword density analysis tool, however, will allow you to "check your work."

Section Assessments: There are two differing 'camps' on this one. Group A lives and dies by keyword density and feels as though it is the secret to high rankings. Group B thinks keyword density is a rather clumsy metric that merely has some correlative relationship with the way search engines approach content.

If you are in Group A, you'll want to use your density tool to make sure you've tweaked your content to the point of perfection. If you fall into Group B, you can use it to make sure your content didn't accidentally neglect a keyword or overuse it to the point of being perceived as spam.

Either way, it's a tool worth having, understanding *and* using.

Free Tools: Keyworddensity.com has a simple KD checker for you.   Creating Online offers an alternative density analysis tool.

Putting Search Engine Ranking Tools To Work:

You can use many of the tools discussed in this course to refine your approach to search engine optimization. At some point, however, you'll want to find out whether all of that hard work is actually paying off. That's where a **search engine ranking tool** can be handy.

A search engine ranking tool will allow you to provide your URL and one or more keywords in which you have an interest. It will then generate a report showing you where you rank on various search engines for that keyword expression.

You could, of course, visit each of the search engines yourself, insert the keyword query, and dig for your site's appearance. A search engine ranking tool doesn't perform any miracles you couldn't do all by yourself.

However, it is a lot handier. Not only does it save you the time of visiting each search engine individually, it also allows you to avoid digging through multiple pages of listings in search of your sites.

Finding where you rank is easy when you're already near the top. Tracking your climb toward the top, however, is a lot easier with a keyword ranking tool.

These tools aren't foolproof. A number of variables can impact their accuracy. A search engine ranking tool does its job by crawling search engine databases and that can result in incorrect results due to the status of indexing runs, the amount of traffic being experienced, and other considerations.

Nonetheless, they generally do a good job of showing you how you are performing with respect to your favored keywords.

Use a keyword ranking tool regularly to learn where your sites rank for your 'critical' keywords.

Section Assessment: If your site is in the top five on all of the big search engines, you can just key in your keywords right at the engine's site and revel in the glory of it all.

If you're like most webmasters, you are probably more interested in making your way up the SERPs with some hope of eventually reaching page one.

Use a monitor to track your progress. It automates an otherwise tedious and time-consuming process.

Free Tool: Mike's Marketing Tools hosts a nifty free tracker you can use.

Using Keyword Generators:

Keywords are at the root of search engine optimization.

A user goes to the search engine and types a query. You want your site to appear when their query is relevant to your site. Thus, you need to rank for those queried terms.

Those are your keywords and they are the very basis of everything else you'll do with respect to search engine optimization.

It starts with search engine users, not with your own assumptions about what keywords are important. You need to have your site optimized for the terms real people are keying into search engines in order to get the most possible traffic. So, the question becomes, "what keywords are people using?"

That's where a keyword generator enters the picture. The process is simple. You type in an obvious base keyword related to your site. Let's say, for instance, that you run a site about "widgets." You'd type "widgets" into the keyword generator.

The generator would then report back to you how many times someone searched for the term "widgets" over a predetermined time period.

That might be interesting and could give you a good idea of whether there is genuine interesting your topic out there among search engine users, but it wouldn't really help you all that much, in and of itself.

That's why the keyword generator digs deeper and also lets you know about other keyword phrases associated with the term you provided.

You asked about "widgets." The keyword generator tells you that 1,000,000 people searched for "widgets" last month. But it also tells you that 89,000 searched for "blue widgets," 66,000 looked for "red widgets," 10,000 searched for "off-white widgets" and that one person even searched for "how to remove a widget from your ear after falling on it."

You now have some truly valuable information. You have a snapshot of user behavior related to your subject matter than you can use to develop your site and to optimize it for particular common searches.

You may not have even thought about the fact that a lot of people are concerned with widget colors, having wrongly assumed their focus was exclusively on performance, for instance.

After seeing those keyword generator numbers, however, **you may realize that it will pay to create pages optimized** for those color considerations.

Before you get too excited and begin to use keyword generator data as a means of guiding your site construction, you should realize a few things about the generators and their **limitations**.

First, the data is not necessarily complete. Often, generators rely upon search information from only a few search engines because data sets from all of the major players are not publicly available. Although they may give you a good idea of numbers, the **results may not be wholly accurate**.

Second, they don't necessarily point the way to the easiest means of generating traffic. Remember, the generator just shows you what people are searching. That's great data, but it is **only part of the equation**.

Let's say the generator told you that 45,000 people searched for "cheap widgets." You might see that search volume and determine that going after that particular keyword phrase would be worth the effort.

What the generator didn't tell you is that there are 1,000,000 pages that use the term "cheap widgets." It didn't tell you that the top 20 sites in the SERPs for "cheap widgets" are all PR7 sites with thousands of great backlinks and impeccable on-page SEO.

In other words, you might have a tough time tapping the "cheap widgets" traffic flow from the search engines simply due to the nature of the competition for that term.

On the other hand, "inexpensive widgets" may have only turned up 20,000 searchers.

A closer examination, though, might point out that there are a scant 500 sites using that term and that the top results for that keyword query are unremarkable sites you could quickly leap-frog with the application of some basic SEO techniques.

Would you rather be the number one listing for a term that gets 20,000 searches, or buried on page 5 of the results for a more popular term? If driving traffic is your goal (and it is), you'll garner greater rewards by going after "inexpensive widgets" instead of "cheap widgets."

So, **the keyword generators give you a list of keywords**. They'll also tell you how often those keywords are used. That's a great beginning.

To make that data really work for you, however, **you also need to be able to assess the competition levels and a series of other factors**.

If you aren't using some kind of keyword generator, you aren't doing yourself any favors. It's a critical part of the process.

However, if you are relying exclusively on a keyword generator without assessing the nature of competition for the keywords revealed, you really aren't making much progress, either.

You need to know more than the most popular keywords to succeed. If you're serious about SEO you'll need to look at a more comprehensive product.

Fortunately, there are a number of solid products on the market that go the extra mile.

These keyword programs will generate keyword lists, but they'll also break down the nature of the competition in addition to showing you how often individual terms were entered. These programs also house a number of additional features to help with search engine optimization and finding ways to drive more search engine traffic to your websites.

A powerful keyword ranking tool will give you a mountain of data that you can use to improve your performance. Of course, it's still up to you to interpret that data and to use it to guide your decision making.

They say that knowledge is power, but that doesn't mean that information is power by itself. It needs to be combined with an understanding of the bigger picture. That's why a comprehensive reference like the [Best Online Ebook](#) or an irresistible step-by-step guide like [Internet Marketing Cookery](#) can be so important.

Guides like those cultivate a way of thinking and depth of understanding that will allow you to take search engine information and interpret it in a way that will lead to real results!

Section Assessment: It all starts and ends with keywords, really. Get a good keyword generator and learn it inside and out. In fact, go beyond a simple generator and find a full-featured program to help you with keyword generation,

competitive analysis, search frequency and all of the other important information you can use to make the best possible SEO decisions.

Most of the tools in this course qualify as helpful, but optional. A few could be termed useless and unnecessary. **Good keyword software, is the one thing that should be considered absolutely essential and incredibly valuable**.

Free Tools: Global Promoter, 1-Hit.com, Traffic Zap and others provide free keyword generation tools.

In Conclusion:

If you want to be successful online, understanding how to work with the search engines should be a top priority. They are an amazing source of absolutely free, targeted traffic. The only trick is learning to create sites that Google, Yahoo and MSN will appreciate.

That process can be time-consuming. In some cases, it can be confusing. In many instances it turns out to be downright frustrating.

But when it works… Well, let's just say that all of those annoyances seem to melt away.

There's definitely a learning curve for search engine mastery. You can't hope that understanding a few basics about the process will be enough to get you good rankings. The web and Internet commerce are both growing too fast and too competitive to think that way. You have to learn about search engine optimization -- there's just no way around it other than outsourcing the task to a professional.

Fortunately, that learning curve isn't insurmountably steep. With a little work and thought you can make some great strides. It's even easier to post those gains when you aren't relying on gut instincts and manual efforts to make progress.

That's why good search engine tools are so valuable. They provide you with ideas, diagnostics, data and insight that will help you go from being absent in the SERPs to finding your way to the front of the line.

By the same token, it pays to avoid the weaker tools and those that have become hopelessly outdated do to search engine advances and refinements.   There's no use spinning your wheels with tools that don't really do much for you! Your time is just too valuable.

Mastering the search engine trade really boils down to a few considerations. You have to **understand the rudimentary principles** underlying search engines and their value. You need to **understand what to do** in order to make your pages more attractive to the search engines. You also need to **know how to use the right tools** to get the job done.

This course was designed to provide you with a quick examination of many different search engine tools so that you can start your SEO work with the right gear in your "toolbox." Hopefully, we also provided some solid background about

the nature of search engines and how you can make more search engine-friendly pages along the way. Now go forth and become an outstanding **SEO Authority**!

To your success!

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