

# Google's "MAYDAY" Update

More often than not, the effects of Google's algorithm changes are hardly noticeable except to those who keep a very close eye on them. Though, once in a while, Google's algorithm updates do result to significant changes in how Google's search engine behave – significant enough that their effect is noticeable to even those who don't spend a lot of time keeping tabs on them. And, usually, these kinds of updates cause a lot of people to panic – Webmasters in particular.

One such update occurred around late April and early May 2010 and has since become widely referred to as "Mayday", a name given by the people at WebmasterWorld.com.

On May 1, 2010, a member of the [Webmaster World forum](#) (who goes by the handle "pontifex") posted a message saying:

*Now, as the dust settles from the last days and my panic is under control, I thought I share some ideas here.*

The cause of his panic? Read on...

*History: Until Tuesday we ramped in around 200k Uniques a day - very strong long tail traffic, 65% of the landing pages are the product details.*

*What happened: First the site lost one PR point from 6 to 5 in the last update. Traffic went up, so I did not care at all, but maybe it completes the picture.*

*Tuesday, April 27th: solid and good traffic, but slightly lower than last week.*

*Wednesday, April 28th: first noticeable drop of around 10%*

*Thursday: 25% loss of traffic to Tuesday*

*Yesterday: 27% loss of traffic to Tuesday*

*Think this is the current status: Lost around 25% of power/traffic somehow.*

“Pontifex” also noted that his loss in traffic was mostly long-tail.

As it turned out, there were others who were affected much worse than “pontifex”. One (“Dave\_Hybrid”) reported of having lost 50% of his site’s traffic over a few days, mostly involving long-tail keywords.

There were also a couple of people (“1script” and “dusky”) who reported of losing 90% of their traffic. “1script” mentioned noticing a batch of drops in traffic (or at least a batch of reports about drops) occurring on March 15th, then April 16th, and April 24<sup>th</sup>, noting that *“the time distance between the batches shortens as we go along - possibly a result of the completion of the switch”*. “Dusky”, on the other hand, also noted that it was also mostly long-tail-related traffic that disappeared for him.

Another member, “giviz”, noted the following:

- Only the internal pages of his site have been hit by the long-tail problem. His home page was not affected.
- 90% of the internal pages were affected by the update in that they lost all their positions and traffic.
- Traffic on internal pages dropped by 80%.
- Some internal pages were hit on the 22nd of March and not on the 14th of April.
- Some internal pages were not affected.
- All pages that were affected are long text content model (2000 words and more).
- All pages that were not affected are short text content model (near 600 words).

Another member, “drall”, noted that it was their bigger site that was most affected. He presented the following stats for the site that had been affected most by the “Mayday update:

- PageRank 7

- 13 years old
- Over 400,000 in-bound links including links from Google, Yahoo, US Government sites, State Government sites, and sites of technology giants
- Site runs direct advertising and does not use adsense or 3rd party ads
- No Google Analytics running, but uses Webtrends 9 instead.
- No substantial changes to design or SEO
- Security audits show site and server are clean
- DNS clear

For comparison, he also posted the stats for the sites that were least affected. They are as follows:

- PageRank 5 to 6
- The sites are barely “worked on”
- Have almost no links
- Generating 1,000 to 4,000 visitors daily prior to the “Mayday” update
- Less than 5% deviation in traffic after the “Mayday” update

“Drall” also noted the following on keyword length:

- 0% drop in single-word keywords (4% increase)
- 6% drop in two-word keywords
- 36% drop in three-word keywords
- 12% drop in keywords with 4 words or more

Aside from traffic, some people also noticed a drop in indexed pages.

Member “John Webster”, for one, noticed decreases in pages indexed of as much as 90% after each major Google upgrade. He used as examples three large old Australian sites:

- Site 1 = 726 K pages (Down 67%)
- Site 2 = 321 K pages (Down 90%)
- Site 3 = 15.9 M pages (Down 45%)

Member “Lame\_Wolf” also noticed the same thing, saying that he noticed a 50% drop in his indexed pages. Another member, “Lexur”, noted a 70% decrease.

Another thing that was noticed is the Google Bot’s increased activity, up to three to four times the usual rate.

As for issues concerning language, member “designaweb” noted that his niche location related site (which is 3 levels deep and available in 16 languages) saw an 80% drop in traffic on some of the languages on April 21, 2010. Traffic went back up six days later though still 30% less than what it used to be. Following is the list of languages in which “designaweb’s” site is available:

- EN-US
- EN-UK (possibly affected)
- DK
- SE (affected)
- FI (affected)
- NO
- IT
- FR
- ES
- PT (affected)
- PL (affected)
- NL
- BE
- DE-AT (affected)
- DE-CH (affected)
- DE-DE (affected)

“Designaweb” explains:

*First ones I spotted were the DE-\* variants. I am using rewritten content for the AT/CH versions, focusing on different phrases (synonyms), so I thought Google thought of these 3 pages as duplicate content and penalized them. However, the Portuguese, Polish, Swedish and Finnish sites are also affected, and although the content all derives (translated) from it's EN-US source, they are all unique, and still affected. I am using 2 separate servers (on completely different IP's, but no pattern can be found in this either.*

With regards to geo targeting, member “zoltan” noted seeing Asian traffic suffering more than that of the US and UK. According to “zoltan”, his U.S., U.K., and Canadian traffic dropped only by 19%, 16%, and 14% respectively, while traffic from China, India, Pakistan, and UAE dropped by 39%, 23%, 25%, and 24%. He also noted that some countries (like South Africa and Turkey) seem to be not affected and that South African traffic even went up by 1%. Traffic from Turkey and Australia went down by 1% and 5% respectively.

However, one member (Andylew) reported a very strange case involving his U.K.-only site which has seen a 90% loss in traffic. According to Andylew, despite his site being specifically targeted to the U.K. audience, it was getting more traffic from China and Luxembourg. U.K. traffic, on the other hand, was barely registered.

Member “internetheaven”, who also has a U.K.-only site. Reported that his site was getting more traffic from the Middle East and Germany.

Member “ohn0”, who joined the forum only after seeing their sites’ traffic drop, reported that their sites which used to generate 4-figure traffic were now getting no traffic at all. He also mentioned that searching for popular search terms was revealing strange results. Even worse, he reported of varying results at different times of the day.

The traffic drop continued into the third week following the first message was posted (on May 1). Several days after Google’s Matt Cutts confirmed at the Google I/O conference that Mayday was indeed an algorithm change, WebmasterWorld forum member “imbckagn” reported that his site’s traffic has already gone down 75% and was continuing to drop. The strange thing is, “imbckagn” was getting traffic from totally different longtail phrases (compared to the phrases that were bringing him traffic prior to the May 4 changes).

## **Not All Suffered Loses**

Amidst the panicking crowd, there were a few who affected positively by the “Mayday” update. Curiously, one of them was relatively new to the practice of SEO.

Quoting directly from the post of user “seolerner”:

*I have site on tight niche theme or you can say, micro niche site. Since the time you people are discussing on losing traffic on long tail kws, I have seen increase in traffic on my site for longtail keywords.*

*As this is my first SEO site, It's not big site. My site has around 34 page. Site is affiliate site and promoting only one product. Content on all pages is related to that product only. Most of backlinks are from articles only.*

*I was trying to get rank for TWO word key-phrase and I achieved that. Recently my site has started getting traffic for long tail keywords which I was not getting previously. By long tail, I mean THREE-FOUR word key-phrases. Majority of them are THREE words key-phrases.*

Another member, “true\_INFP”, who had a PR7 site has not seen any change in traffic (long-tail related or otherwise) that Google is sending them over the past several months.

A member, “trakker guy”, saw his small, feeder sites jump several positions and ended up being on either of the first two positions. Quoting from “trakker guy”:

*I have several tiny, feeder sites that jumped up several positions to #1 or 2 in last weeks. They have domain name with exact match for the 2 word search phrases they rank for. I haven't put much work on these and never expected them to rank as they do (some were competitors I bought out).*

However, he also has a site—his main site—which was badly affected. According to “trakker guy”, it was losing both ranking and traffic for several search terms. As far as ranking is concerned, his site is being overtaken by article site pages and sites/pages with exact match keyword domains with far less backlinks than his. Quoting from “trakker guy”:

*I see the beneficiaries being 2 types:*

- 1. Old domains with less current backlink activity. Regaining ranking from years ago.*

2. *New domains or article site pages with tightly focused content and keyphrase in backlinks.*

*In my case, I really don't see these results remaining as they are, as some of these newly ranking pages/sites are only weeks old, with nothing but thousands of robot generated blog comments for backlinks.*

Contrary to widely accepted belief among webmasters that the update typically affects big sites, forum member “TheMadScientist” reported that his big site was behaving almost the exact opposite of what people are reporting.

## **Other Anomalies**

Aside from the drop in traffic that many were experiencing, many have experienced other, strange things to their site and Google itself. These anomalies have led many to believe that Google is broken.

WebmasterWorld memberer “drall” noted that they have been replaced with KEYWORD.COM/KEYWORD-KEYWORD-KEYWORD/KEYWORD-KEYWORD-KEYWORD.html for thousands of their longtail terms. Many if not all of the sites were scraping content snippets and presented them as an internal search result page. They had no PageRank or in-bound links to the page.

Member “curioustoddler” reported that the product pages of their site – particularly the new ones – were ranking fast on google.com.au. Some of them began showing up later on google.com. The problem was, their site (and/or business) is neither related to nor located in Australia. The site is actually intended for the U.S. only.

Member “Dave\_Hybrid” who was planning for a trip was using Google as a “regular user” one night. He reported that just about all of his long-tail searches (4 to 5 words) returned “complete junk” (e.g., up scrapers, hub spam, social networking spam, thin articles, first posts ripped from forums into wordpress outranking the forum it was ripped from, content ripped from Yahoo answers outranking Yahoo answers).

“Dave\_Hybrid” also noted that all that “junk” appeared on the first page of search results, too. According to “Dave\_Hybrid”, none of the “great” sites he knew showed up in his searches. This led him to suspect that some filters may have been removed by Google.

And it wasn't only the regular organic search results that seem to have been affected. Member "dertyfern" reported that a search for "restaurants in soho" displayed a map of Sokcho-si, Gangwon-do, South Korea. (See image below.)



Many didn't buy in to the idea that what was happening to their sites is a penalty. There were just too many "white hat" sites that were getting affected, including well established .gov and .edu sites, large commercial and corporate sites, as well as well known news and media sites.

Another thing that several forum members noticed is that Google's crawler/bot seems to be ignoring the robot.txt file. This resulted to the indexing of pages that weren't supposed to be indexed.

Forum member "dickbaker" reported about a site that showed up on the first page for a particular search phrase--a common consumer household appliance. "Dickbaker" said that a couple of weeks earlier, that site was at #10. He noted that it didn't have the strength of the other sites in terms of age, links, size of the site, etc. To his amazement, over the following days, the site climbed up to the #1 spot. Quoting from "dickbaker":

*Here's the amazing part, though. The URL takes you to a page that has all sorts of semi-hidden keyword text that you can only see if you scroll very*

*far down. If you click on the button to enter the site, you're taken to a completely different site with a completely different URL and title.*

*So, the #1 result for this somewhat popular and competitive phrase is a cloaked page that uses a sneaky redirect.*

“Dickbaker” also noted that some sites that were showing on the first result page stay there for a few days and then disappear. And many of them just disappear completely and instantly.

Forum member “mercedesP”, who has a small e-commerce site (with 40 pages) that went online in March 2009, said she has done no advertising to promote her site. Instead of advertising, she submitted her site to about 40 free directories. She also mentioned that her site has about 10 natural IBLs which were all acquired through white hat.

As most people on the forum were reporting losses in their site’s traffic, “mercedesP’s” site was gaining traffic and positions in the ranks, although the increased traffic seemed to follow a steady line of about 10 to 15 degrees (no big jumps).

Following are additional details “mercedesP” provided about her site:

- New domain (no previous history);
- Product pages present substantial information about the products, not just technical specs (the only mention of "buy" is on the alt buttons);
- Architecture is in just 2 levels;
- It ranks on first page for many 2-keywords, but long-tail keywords started appearing since about November; and
- The site also experienced increased crawling from Google in April, but saw no drops after (nor ranks or traffic). Instead, it saw more longtail kws like "How to..." or "What is best...".

Several weeks after the first message on the Mayday issue was posted on the forum, several members began reporting that their sites were getting ranked in the SERPs the way they did prior to the traffic crash. But all of them reported that, despite their sites returning to their former ranks (for their long-tail keywords), their traffic

remains down, without even a slight increase.

While some were reporting not seeing improvements in traffic, some were reporting traffic coming from unusual sources. Forum member “cien” reported that people were getting to his “squeaky clean” site through adult-oriented keywords. And it wasn’t only webmasters who were noticing this.

Forum member “Andylew” reported about receiving a call from a client who is non-computer literate. According to “Andylew”, his client thought that there was something wrong with his computer because he kept getting adult and spam sites from Google.

There are also reports of situations where traffic was either up or unchanged but no sales. Forum member “backdraft” reported of having his first ZERO sales day in his site’s 10-year existence. According to “backdraft”, Google reported that his site had more than 11,300 hits and 576Mb of bandwidth. When he did had a sale (two actually), they came from Pakistan and the UAE, two countries which he never have sold anything to.

Forum member “tessmac” noticed that Google was serving old results (some going as far back as 1999). He did more tests using a one word, ultra competitive keyword on G.co.uk and was served the following:

1. Lots of newspaper articles. All old, the most recent being 2009. None with cache.
2. Some really awful bebo-type pages.
3. Whole bunch (40%) of hacked and redirected authority sites.
4. Top 10, reasonably consistent with what should be there, but most (if not all) are aged sites with a strong back link history over several years.

## **Speculations and Observations**

As to the reason why traffic was dropping, the people at WebmasterWorld posed the following possibilities:

- The update resulted to more content being indexed. Though, it’s also possible that the contents that surfaced after the update were already in Google’s index

except that they were not appearing in the search results because they were deemed of low quality before.

- New weighting of internal links.
- Google is crawling deeper and thus finding many new links.
- The update enabled Google to take a better look at what's been there all along.
- Google has made a change in their phrase-based indexing approach. Until recently queries for long phrases are returned with "best guess" results using some secondary signals. Now, Google may already have the infrastructure to index longer phrases much more directly.
- Google's new infrastructure only has half of the data, the other half is still in the old one. So, Google's new infrastructure is only able to retrieve the data that's in it's databases. Quoting from what Webmasterworld user "dusky" wrote: *"The data that is still to be moved and awarded PR and IBLs/EBLs is mostly deep end-of-branch pages which are the bulk of the Internet, while homepages and second in PR command pages are likely to be the short tail well established pages, and they are mostly fine because they were moved first"*.
- Links are out, content is in.
- Google's "did you mean" database has been expanded immensely and has been given a green light to take over results to be "you probably meant:" rather than "did you mean?" Some blame the drop in traffic on this saying that Google's suggestions are wrong in most occasions.
- Google has decided that a site should only have so many pages in the index thus giving their database much more room to add many more websites.
- Certain aspects of SEO are now less important, maybe even redundant, to Google.
- New sites with very fresh back links (no PR links) are doing better than old authority websites on long-tail searches.
- Google is recognizing keywords by search queries amount and applies less/more filtering or a completely different algorithm.

- Google is still re-indexing and moving data, many good quality sites are usually re-indexed and revaluated at major updates, which seems like filters are tuned off, but actually they are not. It's the PR/Trustrank for major sites while being re-indexed is being revaluated. They are left rankless and flat for a while, that's why blackhat and useless sites are tuning up on many competitive keywords outranking them.
- The affected sites are being re-indexed all over from scratch, having their data moved slowly to the new infrastructure and their PR / Trustrank is being revaluated after all pages are indexed. Other inferior sites and pages are overtaking them because Google has not yet finished re-gathering all data on them, old and new, and has not yet applied their rank factors to push them up to what ranking they deserve.
- Snowballing effect – While sites are re-evaluated, inbound and outbound links are also affected from those sites and to them as if backlinks no longer apply anymore until the complete re-indexing procedure is done and all data is moved, cleaned and ranked again.
- The weighting of relevance has increased whereas PR now has less weight.
- Many sites' rank has been discounted until they are re-spidered and indexed from scratch, hence the increased Gbot activity.
- Google is now looking more at CTR and bounce rates. They know exactly if clicks result in conversions. If those on your site do not, you get whacked.
- Personalized search is kicking in at Google big time
- "Super factors" before MayDay:
  - ✓ Keyword in title
  - ✓ Keyword on page in unique content
  - ✓ Named links to this page
  - ✓ Trust from the link sources

After Mayday:

- ✓ all the above

- ✓ page loading speed
  - ✓ user clicks in the SERPs
  - ✓ user time on the destination
- Google is experimenting with the AI concept and the aim to finally to eradicate SEO firms and experts from influencing the SERPs without due merit.
  - Stale results are a thing of the past.
  - Google is fighting the technical things SEOs are doing.
  - Side bar, footer, and blogroll-type links are being devalued.

## Summing It All Up

Below is a summary of the anomalies that were identified by WebmasterWorld forum members:

- Substantial increase in their Gbot activity
- Long tail ranking drop
- Continuous decrease in site: indexed pages
- Mostly medium to large or old / well established sites
- Gbot includes asking for very old non existent, deleted pages / URL flavors
- Penalty like effects, when searching for expected earned keyword returns, you get a site about your site or about something on your site on another site, but not your page or site
- PR is the same
- Main corporate keyword/name is ranking as usual, BUT if the keywords are generic and are in the domain, some sites sliding to page 2/3/4/5+ and back and forward
- Sitelinks where applicable are still there for main keyword / company name

- No reports of substantial change on sites to warrant the drop and are white hat
- Traffic dropped between 20-90% in the last three months, for some recovered two or three times and dipped again, for others, dropped even further since the update, but GBot is still at it for most like never before
- Backlinks decreasing on Webmaster Tools
- More of product/ecommerce own products sites affected, maybe because most have large count of pages and takes longer to spider. Even more if products are a feed from Amazon/ebay's shopping etc. (Could be due to either larger number of pages or a "thin" affiliate site.)
- Google's new layout seems to have a small impact, especially for product/ecommerce based sites.
- Connecting words (eg: in, at, on, among) seem to be having a lot more relevance now.
- Google recognizes that "USA" is the same as "United States" (since searching for "united states" also boldens USA). But if your page does not contain "United States" explicitly, your page is not displayed when searching for "red widgets united states".

## Google's Response

On May 20, 2010, at the Google I/O conference, Matt Cutts finally gave a confirmation that "Mayday" was indeed an algorithm change, though he didn't provide any other specifics.

*this is an algorithmic change in Google, looking for higher quality sites to surface for long tail queries. It went through vigorous testing and isn't going to be rolled back.*

Search Engine Land's Vanessa Fox, who was at the conference, wrote an [article](#) a week later saying that Google told her that it was a rankings change and not a crawling or indexing change. To Fox, this implies that sites getting less traffic still have their pages indexed, but some of those pages are no longer ranking as highly

as before.

Basing on Matt's comment, Fox said that the so-called Mayday update impacts "long tail" traffic, which generally is from longer queries that few people search for individually, but in aggregate can provide a large percentage of traffic.

Just like some people at the WebmasterWorld forum, Fox noted that the change seems to have a larger, nastier impact on very large sites with "item" pages that don't have many individual links into them, as well as sites that may not have substantial unique and value-added content on them.

Fox also mentions that, based on Matt's comment at Google I/O, the pages that are now ranking well for long tail queries are from "higher quality" sites (or perhaps are "higher quality" pages).

According to Fox:

*My complete speculation is that perhaps the relevance algorithms have been tweaked a bit. Before, pages that didn't have high quality signals might still rank well if they had high relevance signals. And perhaps now, those high relevance signals don't have as much weight in ranking if the page doesn't have the right quality signals.*

For people who have sites that have been badly affected by the update, Fox recommends that they isolate a set of queries for which their site now is getting less traffic, check out the search results to see what pages are ranking instead, and taking note of their qualities that make them seem as "valuable" in the eyes of Google. Fox says:

*From the discussion at the Google I/O session, this is likely a long-term change so if your site has been impacted by it, you'll likely want to do some creative thinking around how you can make these types of pages more valuable (which should increase user engagement and conversion as well).*

Fox would post a message on WebmasterWorld a day later emphasizing that all the things she wrote in her article (aside from what Cutts was quoted of actually saying) was only her speculation.

She explained that Matt Cutts has specifically stated that the algorithm change was intended to surface "higher quality" sites/pages. Thus, basing on that, she speculated on what it might mean and how those affected might go about figuring out how to improve their sites to meet that higher quality standard.

Fox emphasized that none of the speculation she made in her article is based on inside knowledge of any kind.

She also mentioned that she doubts that the update is related to caffeine, since caffeine is an infrastructure change, and not a ranking algorithm change.

On May 30, 2010, Matt Cutts, posted a video on the Webmaster Central YouTube channel to explain about "Mayday". Following is a complete transcription of what Matt Cutts said:

*A lot of webmasters have been talking about it, so I'm glad I have a chance to address it. Uh, this is something that webmasterworld called "Mayday", and it sort of happened April 28 through May 3rdish, so right around the first of May, so that's why they've been calling it Mayday.*

*It is an algorithmic change, and it does affect long-tailed searches more than head searches. It is deliberate, and it's a quality change that's been through all the normal quality launch committee, side-by-sides, making sure that things look good from a quality perspective. So, it has nothing to do with Caffeine, although Caffeine is proceeding apace, so it's completely independent or orthogonal of Caffeine. It is an algorithm change and so there's no manual stuff involved here, this is purely our algorithms thinking that some sites are a better match for some queries than some other sites. And it's not temporary.*

*This is something we're trying to assess the quality of sites, we're trying to find the best sites that match up to long-tailed queries, and it's an algorithmic change that changes how we assess which sites are the best match for long-tailed queries.*

*So, if you're affected by Mayday, the sort of thing to think about is [...] "Have I got the highest-quality site? Am I showing up for the most relevant searches? What sort of thing can I do in terms of adding great content, making sure that [...] people consider me an authority, that I'm not just matching something that's off-topic, or that users won't find at all that useful?"*

*But the main thing to know is, it is an algorithmic change, it's gone through the whole process. We don't expect this to be temporary, there was no sort of human judgement involved with, "We thought this site was good,*

*or we thought it was bad" instead it is algorithmic. It does affect long-tailed searches more, and after going through the entire evaluation, we did decide that it was a quality win, and so a few people have noticed it, but not the entire world has noticed it. Bear in mind that we make over four hundred changes per year, in terms of actual quality changes where we're tweaking, or introducing, or improving an algorithm. So, this is one of those changes.*

*It was a little more visible to some people who really pay attention to long-tailed searches, but we do believe it's a quality win, and we expect it to continue going forward.*

Note that Matt Cutts said that the change:

- has nothing to do with the “Caffeine” update (an infrastructure change that is not yet fully rolled out);
- is entirely algorithmic (and isn’t, for instance, a manual flag on individual sites);
- impacts long tail queries more than other types;
- was fully tested and is not temporary.

On June 9, 2010, WebProNews ran an [article](#) on an interview they did with Matt Cutts regarding MayDay. In the interview, Cutts mentioned that MayDay was designed to “try and spot” signals of quality on pages and sites that would be good for users.

Cutts noted that the update was not part of his Webspam team's efforts, but rather was part of general search quality, and that no human intervention is involved in its operation. According to Cutts, it's strictly algorithmic.

Cutts says auto-generated pages and content farms are the ones that will be severely hit by Mayday. He advises webmasters who have been affected by it to improve on their sites/pages’ quality. Cutts advises webmasters to make sure they're returning/providing the highest quality content for users. Stuff that's not available anywhere else can be helpful (stuff that's not copied or scraped from somewhere else).

## A Tip...

One WebmasterWorld member (“Lorel”) who (supposedly) wasn’t badly affected by the update voiced out and provided some tips on May 29, 2010. However, his post was largely ignored by the other members.

According to “Lorel”, he manages about 50 sites and none of them have lost a major portion of their traffic (10% is the most he lost). He mentioned that most of his sites are small sites with under 100 pages although he has one that’s over 4,000 pages.

According to “Lorel”, he follows Google’s guidelines “to the point of being obsessive”. Among the things he said he doesn’t do are:

- buying links
- triangular linking
- blog rolls
- trade links

He also said that he always encourage his clients to add content that people want to link to on their own and to also participate in forums, blogs, set up a twitter account or facebook, and other social marketing to draw traffic, if not links. And in designing sites, he makes sure the he and/or his clients focus on 2-3 word phrases and interlink them from within their content to their other pages.

He also mentions about taking special care with canonical fixes, avoiding duplicate content, and too empty pages. He also claimed to insist that his clients add a couple paragraphs of unique content to each product page and have more than one page focusing on a product. He also mentioned about keeping those pages linked from, and close to, the home (not buried within folders).

Quoting from “Lorel”:

*Not all of my clients take action on my advice but those that do are doing ok even in this bad economy. One of them said he's had his best year ever, this last year, even with this bad economy.*

*My own site is so busy I turn down a couple jobs per week and I'm constantly on the verge of burnout (don't have time to read WebmasterWorld much anymore) and I don't even focus on my main keywords. I provide info (articles and tutorials) that helps other website owners and that draws in enough work to keep me busy and I don't have to go searching for links either.*

*Basically I follow what Matt and Vanessa have been preaching for years.*

## **More Than a Month Later, Still Nothing**

More than a month after the effects of Mayday was first felt, anomalies in the SERPs were still being noticed.

WebmasterWorld member “scottsonline” reported that, after conducting a routine search for a product using the manufacturers name followed by the product name, only one acceptable (100% relevant) result appeared in the first result page. As a matter of fact, it was the only 100% relevant result he saw in the first 20 result pages. The stranger thing is, the other results had nothing to do at all with the with the specific product match that he was searching for.

Member “backdraft7” reported still seeing too many made-for-AdSense sites/pages in Google’s search results.

Member “John\_C”, who hasn’t had any problems earlier (he even saw a 20% increase in traffic), reported that on June 2, his site’s traffic from Google went down by more than 95%.

As for the details about “John\_C’s” site:

- It’s a niche site.
- It has been updated regularly, with new relevant content being added all the time.
- It has good linking.
- It was ranking top 3 for the past year. (It’s currently in #6.)

“John\_C” noted that the particular long tail that his site was ranking for has since

been bringing in unusual top results. He said that many sites in top 10 are new (1 page sites), have no back links, and have little content. He also noted that, one of the listed sites is his – a single-page site that he has never used. It has very little content and it doesn't have even a single back link.

Forum member “sean22” said that he has evidence to show that would indicate that there's indeed something wrong with Google. According to him, page one of Google's result page is typically dominated by brands. But he points out that at the #1 position is a site that is clearly gaming the system.

He also noted that the most dominant brands have a listing on the first page and a second listing on the second page. Brands that have a mere mention of a keyword in their description are massing on the third page. Another oddity that “sean” 22 noticed is an old aged parked domain for sale with exact match keyword appears on page 2 with no links and no content. This is a competitive niche where the first two pages were mostly very good quality.

Member “londrum” did a search using the term “search engine”. Strangely enough, Google returned results in the following order:

- Top – Wikipedia definition
- Second – Dogpile
- Third – Bing
- Fourth – Altavista (has two entries in the top 10)
- Fifth – Google

Forum member “drall” did a webmaster/google related 3 word search which according to him, is a VERY common problem. The following are his results:

- 1st result was a spammy article from Denmark dated 2003
- 2nd to 9th result were a combination of old blogs and mash style sites and one scraper style site with almost no useful content
- 10th result was WebmasterWorld with mini results. The main WebmasterWorld result and the mini results, according to “drall”, were more on

target and useful than the first nine results or any of the results on the second and third pages.

## Mayday = Payday (for Google)?

Some forum members have been speculating that the primary purpose of the Mayday update was to increase Google's earning from AdWords. Quoting from "arizonadude":

*I went to ad some more Adword campaigns today and I noticed the prices for keywords have really increased.*

*Looks like they accomplished what they wanted.*

*Increased adwords prices, more people clicking the adwords.*

*That will make for a great quarterly return on their profit statements and keep investors happy which is what Google is all about.*

## Another Tip

On June 10, 2010, forum member "Andylew" posted a message reporting that they were starting to see some increase in traffic after doing considerable changes to their site over the past six weeks. However, his message implied that he wasn't sure whether or not the changes have indeed contributed to do with the increased traffic. What he did instead was to provide a hint as to what he thinks is going on. Quoting from "Andylew":

*Not trying to be an enemy but if this update is to filter out the autogenerated massive sites then I think it is a good thing. We are calling it their 'too good to be true' filter.*

*One hint I would give is that from their point of view they will have to be 100% sure that the site triggers this filter if they cant be 100% sure they are better off not filtering it (amazon etc) - think creatively people this should be easy to 'fool'. Programatically it would be very easy to add coding errors or page variations based on a very simple AI - start coding!*

*Otherwise the best advise is start adding original content!*

