



## Link Development Part II: Find the Links that Count!

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## I. Introduction

Part 1 of this Link Development whitepaper

<http://morevisibility.com/whitepaper/LinkDevelopmentPartI.pdf>

covered the basics of linking. It defined links and explained their importance in today's Search Engine algorithms. One of the key takeaways of the paper was the concept of anchor text in links. The first paper also spent time on the types of links available and some rules on how to acquire them.

This paper takes the topic to the next level. Now knowing the types of links and rules, the question is where do you get the links? There are an abundance of Web sites to get links from. Some are free, some are paid and some of them you may not realize even counted as links.

There are some very creative ways to increase your site's inbound links without making any external effort to go get them. This tactic is known as "Link Bait." While that phrase may seem negative, it is far from it. Link Bait is a very legitimate way to enhance a Web site's content and naturally grows quality backlinks.

## II. Where to Get Links

This section will define each type of site, explain how to find them, give submission recommendations and include a few examples.

### A. Authority Web Sites

**Define:** These are sites that rank very highly for industry specific terms. They are frequently organizations or informational Web sites that serve as authoritative resources.

**Find:** Search for high-level or broad keywords specific to your industry. Examine the results for Web sites that do not appear to be corporate Web sites. A slightly more refined tactic involves adding phrased like "add url" or "submit your site" to the high-level or broad keyword searches. This technique may yield the authority Web sites and lead directly to the pages used for submissions.

**Submit:** Review the site and look for links. Some sites may have links placed throughout the page, while others may have a specific link page or link directory. Link pages usually have some type of "submit url" option. Vary the text used in links or submissions. If the main keyword for a site is "link

building," use a variety of phrases like: "link building company," "link building services" and "link building techniques."

**Examples:** [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) (good all around authority Web site), [nyc.chamber.com](http://nyc.chamber.com) (Authority site for New York-based companies), [www.hostchart.com](http://www.hostchart.com) (Authority site for Web Hosting companies).

## B. Directories

**Define:** These are Web sites that exist to categorize, organize and link to other Web sites. They typically rely on human interaction for the listings. The find and submit for Directories are very similar to the ones for the authority sites.

**Find:** Search for high-level or broad keywords specific to your industry. Examine the results for Web sites that do not appear to be corporate Web sites. A slightly more refined tactic involves adding phrased like "add url" or "submit your site" to the high level or broad keyword searches. The keyword "directory" can also be added to further refine the results. Specialized directories can be just as useful as better known ones.

**Submit:** Review the category structure and find the most relevant area for submission based on top keywords. In some cases, it is possible to submit to multiple categories and gain multiple directory links. Three to five different title and description variations should be compiled prior to submitting to directories. Even the best written titles and descriptions may be completely modified by the directory editor. Many directories charge a fee to have the site reviewed and considered for inclusion. The amount of the fee usually correlates with the quality of the directory.

**Examples:** [www.dmoz.org](http://www.dmoz.org), [dir.yahoo.com](http://dir.yahoo.com), [www.business.com](http://www.business.com), [www.botw.org](http://www.botw.org), [www.joeant.com](http://www.joeant.com), [www.uncoverthenet.com](http://www.uncoverthenet.com), [www.goguides.org](http://www.goguides.org), and [www.thomasnet.com](http://www.thomasnet.com).

## C. .edu and .gov Web Sites

**Define:** Search Engines assign more weight to links from .edu and .gov Web sites than many other types of sites.

**Find:** Search for "site:edu" or "site:gov" plus high-level or broad keywords specific to your industry.

**Submit:** It is very difficult to obtain links from .gov Web sites. Review them for other outbound links and compare

them to your site. You may be able to lobby for a link if they have an outbound link section. Web sites within .edu domains may be easier to come by. Students may be given personal home pages for the duration of their attendance. Their Web sites are great places to attain links.

**Examples:** [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov), [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov), [www.stanford.edu](http://www.stanford.edu), and [www.umiami.edu](http://www.umiami.edu).

#### **D. Media Web Sites**

**Define:** This category covers a wide variety of Web sites. It includes news sites, news publications and news aggregators.

**Find:** Use [news.google.com](http://news.google.com) and search for top-level keywords. This will yield an abundance of quality news and media Web sites. Also check for online versions of popular, industry-specific publications.

**Submit:** Media site links are most readily available by submitting quality articles with links back to your Web site. Articles can be short editorials or robust white papers.

**Examples:** [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com), [www.techcrunch.com](http://www.techcrunch.com), and [www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com).

#### **E. Social Sites**

**Define:** Any Web 2.0 site that depends on user generated content.

**Find:** The most popular sites can be found on [Alexa](http://www.alexa.com). Niche social sites are not as popular but can be just as valuable for links.

**Submit:** Profiles on these sites should be completely filled out. Where possible include links back to your Web site. Some of the sites are de-valuing links by putting them through a redirect url. The best way to check is to mouse over the links after they are added and see if they match the link provided. See MoreVisibility's Whitepaper on Social Media Marketing

<http://morevisibility.com/whitepaper/LinkDevelopmentPartI.pdf> for more in-depth link suggestions.

**Examples:** [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com), [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us), [www.stumbleupon.com](http://www.stumbleupon.com), [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), and [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

#### **F. Press Releases**

**Define:** Any traditional Press or News announcement released online.

**Find:** There are many news wire services available on the World Wide Web.

**Submit:** When writing the press release pay close attention to valuable keywords. Link those keywords back to your Web site. It is best to use less than 5 links. Another good practice is deep linking (linking to relevant content based on the keyword beyond the home page). The release should be posted to your Web site a few days before it is released on a wire service.

**Examples:** [www.prweb.com](http://www.prweb.com), [www.marketwire.com](http://www.marketwire.com), [www.businesswire.com](http://www.businesswire.com), and [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com).

### **G. Article Bios**

**Define:** The area of an article that includes information about the author.

**Find:** Article bios are not found but rather added to any content that may be published on another Web site.

**Submit:** Utilize this section of your original content effectively. Include information about the writer and the company. Write the bios using valuable keywords and links back to their sites.

**Examples:** Andrew Wetzler, President of [MoreVisibility – a full service interactive marketing agency](#).

### **H. Comments**

**Define:** One of the areas of Web 2.0 sites where user generated content is added.

**Find:** Comment areas may exist on any of the media or social sites previously mentioned.

**Submit:** Each site has their own rules about adding links in the comments area. Abide by those rules and post useful content. Signature lines are a great way to post links. Some forums even have business information exchange areas.

**Examples:** [forums.mbworld.org](http://forums.mbworld.org), [www.clickz.com](http://www.clickz.com), [outdoorsbest.zeroforum.com](http://outdoorsbest.zeroforum.com), and [www.petlovers.com](http://www.petlovers.com).

## **III. Link Bait**

Section II reviewed ways to actively pursue inbound links. What if there was a way to eliminate that entire process? There is. The

answer is simple: Make a Web site that is so good, everyone wants to link to it.

There are many ways to make a Web site spectacular. There are also many types of content that naturally promote links. The phrase “Link Bait” is an industry term that applies to the following kinds of content:

**A. Whitepapers** – These are essay-style, very informative papers on specific subject matters. Originally they were designed more for technical specifications, but they have a much broader use today. When written on valuable topics, whitepapers naturally drive links. Bloggers like discussing them and linking to them. College students may link to them. News sites may pick them up and comment on them. Web writers may even write editorials on them.

Whitepapers should have catchy, keyword-rich titles. They should be hosted on the Web site and promoted. It is a good to add links at the top or bottom of the paper to add it to Del.icio.us, Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon, or other social sites.

**B. Editorials** – These are shorter articles that provide commentary on timely subject matter. When they are written on valuable topics, editorials naturally drive links. Bloggers like discussing them and linking to them. College students may link to them. News sites may pick them up and comment on them.

Editorials should have catchy, keyword-rich titles. They should be hosted on the Web site and promoted. It is not a bad idea to add links at the top or bottom of the article to add it to Del.icio.us, Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon, or other social sites.

**C. Controversial Topics** – This type of content is where the phrase “link bait” actually came from. Web copywriters learned that when they posted something that was controversial or incendiary, it would provide the kind of fire to start a roaring fire. That fire wound up drawing lots of attention, traffic, and links to the article. This can be a slippery slope depending on the subject matter, but there is also the saying that *even bad press is better than no press*.

SEO Expert Proves that Google PigeonRank is Real!  
<http://www.google.com/technology/pigeonrank.html> That is about as incendiary as this paper will go.

Controversial content should have tabloid-style headlines. As with editorials, these articles should be hosted on the Web site and promoted. It is not a bad idea to add links at the top or bottom of the article to add it to Del.icio.us, Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon, or other social sites.

**D. Creative Content** – Almost a complete 180 degree turnaround in strategy, this tactic uses the best approach to “link bait.” Add very creative content to the Web site. This content can be cute, funny, silly, or really smart. Its goal is to be very catchy in an effort to drive natural links.

*i. Top Ten Lists* – Top ten lists are fun and can be very creative. They provide a nice break from the norm. They can be addictive to read and very viral. Use keywords where possible and make them easy to link to.

*ii. Checklists* – These can be extremely useful for your site visitors. Checklists created by site owners usually contain expert content and may drive links from valuable resources.

*iii. Contests and Games* – User engagement is a great way to increase site usage, traffic, and viral marketing of a Web site. Develop custom games that are relevant to the Web site and watch the inbound links pour in. Burger King’s [Subservient Chicken](#) is a well known example of this.

**E. Tools** – Whether it is a free mortgage calculator or a keyword position checker, Web site tools make a site increasingly useful. If the tools are good, they can be a great source of backlinks. Invest in their development – the long-term benefits could be huge.

**F. Vanity Content** – This is perhaps the greatest link bait that exists today. It is also one of the most under-utilized tactics. Take advantage (in a good way) of your customer’s vanity. If your Web site sells dog shirts, solicit pictures of

your client's dogs wearing your dog shirt. If you have a wedding photography company, post pictures of the Weddings you shot. The dog owner is proud of his dog on your site so he or she links to it and emails all their friends and family about it. The same goes for the proud newlyweds.

Vanity content does not apply to every Web site, but even testimonials could achieve the same objective. Think of creative ways to keep bringing visitors back to your site. The better the content, the more likely they are to link to it, post about it and pass it on to other prospects.

#### **IV. Paid Links Controversy**

Since Google first announced the "linking" component of their algorithm, there has been a paid links controversy. Spammers, people who try to manipulate search results for their own traffic purposes, are always looking for ways to beat the Search Engines. It was a simple hypothesis, if links are valuable, why not pay for them? The first paid links were simple Webmaster agreements. Then paid linking became an art. Companies formed to serve as clearing houses and brokers for link buying. Manipulating Google's algorithm became possible through financial means.

Paid links are not new. The Yahoo Directory has charged a reviewal fee for many years. Most of the top directories charge fees. Technically, these are paid links. If a Web site sells adjustable beds, a link from a demographically targeted Web site like AARP could be invaluable. Google AdSense, a program for Webmasters to monetize their sites with paid Google ads, is even a version of paid links.

Google announced in June 2007 on the Official Google Blog that they will start penalizing sites that sell text links. Google has gone so far as to add a "Report Paid Links" button to their Webmaster tools. Their strict new stance caused quite a stir in the SEO community in the summer of 2007.

#### **Conclusion – Part 2**

Link building is the most tedious and time-consuming element of Search Engine Optimization. Knowing the basics of linking, the rules of linking, and where to get the links is a great way to start the process. Time has to be devoted to this effort. Links should be acquired regularly with a variety of anchor text. Link development

should also be tracked. Use Google Webmaster Tools and Yahoo Site Explorer to track link growth.

There are no shortcuts to link development. Utilizing tactics like press releases and creative content can yield swifter results. Paying a company to add your site to a 100,000 site link network, can get you penalized in the Search Engines. Invest the proper amount of time, energy, and finances whether this endeavor is pursued in-house or outsourced. With the proper link development strategy a Web site can grow to the top of the search ranks for a variety of keywords.

[If you missed Part 1 of this Whitepaper, you may download it here.](#)