

SEO NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2013

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1

GOOGLE WARNS AGAINST LARGE SCALE GUEST BLOG POSTING

In October 2012, Matt Cutts released a [video](#) about Google's view on Guest Blogging for Links.

Now, Google went one step further in clarifying their position when they updated their [link schemes](#) section within the Google Webmaster Guidelines to address guest blog posting. The guidelines now say that Large-scale article marketing or guest posting campaigns with "keyword-rich" anchor text links will most probably impact a site's ranking negatively in SERPs, especially if the quality of the blog is in question.

- Buying or selling links that pass PageRank. This includes exchanging money for links, or posts that contain links; exchanging goods or services for links; or sending someone a "free" product in exchange for them writing about it and including a link
- Excessive link exchanges ("Link to me and I'll link to you") or partner pages exclusively for the sake of cross-linking
- Large-scale article marketing or guest posting campaigns with keyword-rich anchor text links
- Using automated programs or services to create links to your site

So, should we stop doing guest blogging?

The answer to this is no, not yet. We still believe that guest blogging is a legitimate inbound marketing tactic. But like so many other strategies, it can and has been abused. But if we do it the right way, it's one of the best methods to get quality links.

However, we make sure to consider the below important points to protect your websites from possible future issues:

1. The posts that we write comprise of high quality content and relevant to the topic and industry.
2. Our content writers research the latest trends in your industry and include important facts in the article while making sure it doesn't look spammy.
3. We get you contextual links from guest posts which are actually liked and recommended by Google.

4. Each post is submitted to just one blog so as to avoid any duplicate content issues and Google de-valuing those links.
5. We get links from branded and partial match terms as against keyword rich anchor texts which are not recommended by Google.
6. Finally, we make sure to add Google+ Authorship to each blog post which protects the content and gives it a chance to rank higher in Google SERPs.
7. We only select blogs which accept unique content.

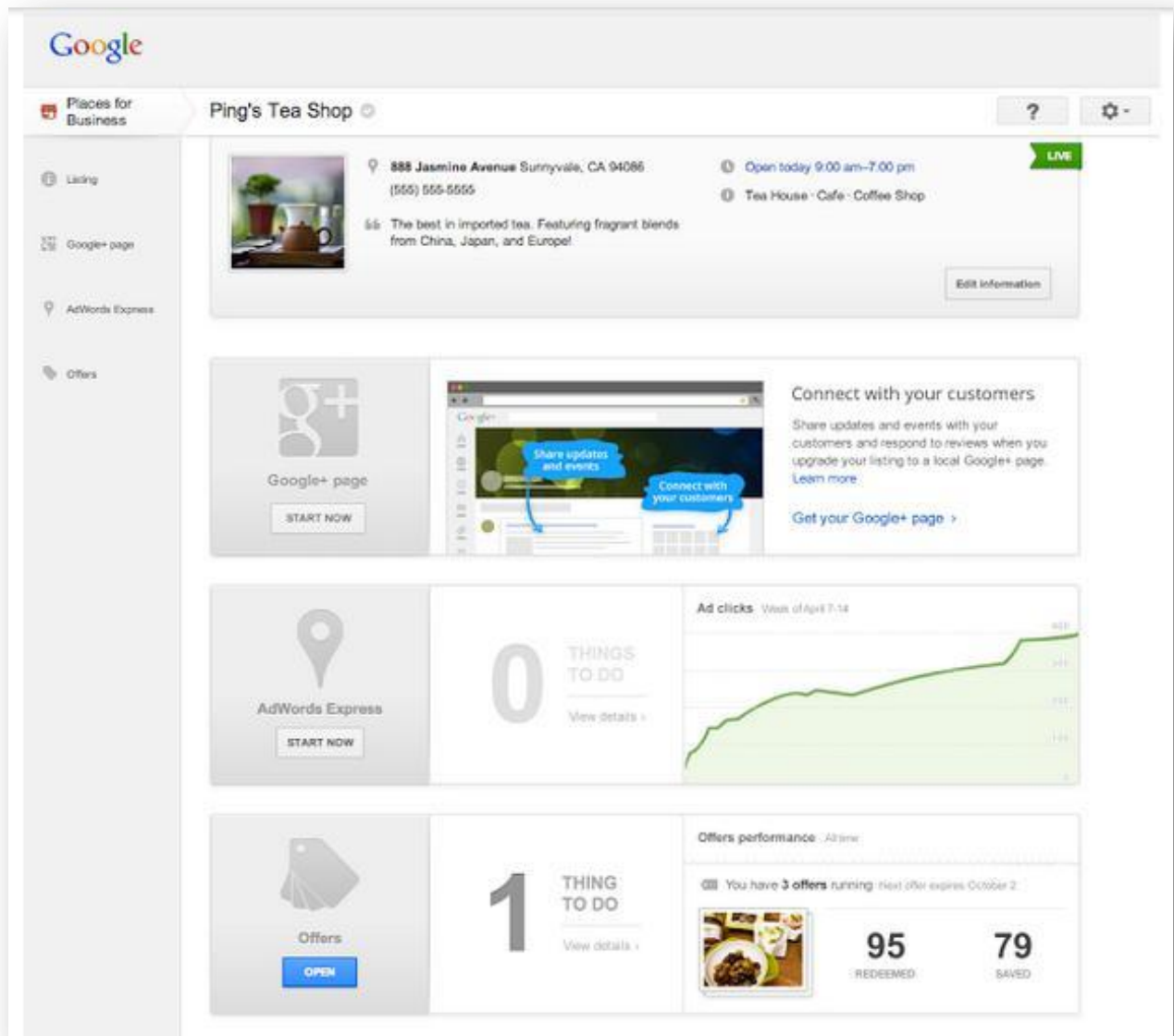
To conclude, we certainly don't believe that guest blogging is dead (at least not yet) but can clearly hurt you if you do it the wrong way.

2

GOOGLE MIGRATING USERS FROM GOOGLE+ LOCAL TO ITS NEW PLACES DASHBOARD

Google just [announced](#) in its product forums that they have started the process of migrating existing Dashboard users to the new Places for Business Dashboard. For now, the new dashboard is only available to new signups, but it will be gradually rolling out to all existing Places (aka Google+ Local) users soon.

Google has provided a very good [explanation](#) of the new Places dashboard on their local business blog, and Mike Blumenthal has a very nice visual round-up featuring screenshots of all the new features in his [blog post](#).



What has improved?


1. New Design and Layout with a cleaner, easier to use interface. As with most of the other products, Google has given the Dashboard a “Google+” ish look.
2. Better integration with other Google products. The Dashboard now includes a tab to allow business owners to manage their Google+ Local pages making it easier for owners to gain access to the social features of Google+, such as sharing posts, photos and videos. If you do not have a Google account, you will not see the Google+ Local page tab on your Google Places Dashboard.
3. Faster Updating. Edits will now be approved and go live quicker. Google is promising faster data updates in most cases.
4. Service Area Businesses can now hide their physical address, and specify whether they serve customers at a storefront or if they visit their customers. We feel this is a big improvement.
5. A slicker photo upload functionality. Photo uploads now use the improved Google+ photo upload interface and allow for drag and drop uploads.
6. The business description editor allows you to add rich text and URLs. This will make sure that **you can link to your website** straight from your business description. The 200 character limit in the description field has also been removed. However, the more rich text you add, the more likely that it will require longer moderation and thus the delay in getting your listing up.


As with improvements, there are also a few concerns associated with the new Dashboard.


- 1. No Custom Business Categories** - While Google now allows you to choose up to 10 categories for your business, they have removed the ability to create Custom Business Categories. This can be a problem especially for very niche businesses. The custom categories you submitted in the old dashboard will be removed. According to Google, Business owners should try to select an “auto-filled” category that most closely describes their business.


Category


Categories describe what your business is, **not** what it does or what it sells.


Correct examples:	Incorrect examples:	Hide 
Italian Restaurant	Pizza & pasta	
Pet Supply Store	Pet food and toys	
Wedding Photographer	Photos for events	


Type a category 


Type a category 


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Save

Cancel

Please note: Your edits may be reviewed for quality before being published live. [Learn more.](#)

2. **Missing Reviews & Ratings** – Another possibility during the transfer could be reviews and ratings going missing during the transition. We have had this incident a few days ago. Since users look upon reviews about a particular local business before making a choice, such mishaps could prove costly.

Changing the business name could also trigger this issue. Here is one such [instance](#).
3. We have also found reports of **phone numbers, websites, or descriptions going missing** in Google Places. Go through this [link](#) on Google Forums where people are complaining about the same.
4. **Cannot Add Videos Anymore** – Videos will not appear publicly, and the previous data will not be transferred onto the new dashboard. The “Videos” field no longer appears in the dashboard. If you wish to post videos on the listing for your business, you need to upgrade to a local Google+ page.
5. **No Improvement In Verification System** – The verification process for listings is still the same. Businesses still need to get a PIN via mail, SMS or phone call and enter this into their listings so they can take control of their listing.
6. **No More Enhanced Data** - Often customers want to know if a business has a parking lot, carries multiple brands, has special accommodations, etc. The feature that once allowed us to add this information will no longer be available.
7. **No Improvement in Analytics** – The Data reported on your Google+ listing has still not improved. You still get approximate views, clicks and call-to-action as usual.
8. Apart from this, Mike Blumenthal in his [blog post](#) listed a catalog of current bugs in Google Places and the Google Places Dashboard.

Even though with all these improvements, Google still advises that you do NOT merge any of your existing Google Local Listing with new Google+ Local Page yet. They already made it clear that there still are some errors & the process will take some time.

3

GOOGLE TESTING BUSINESS LOGOS IN ORGANIC SERPS

It seems like Google is quite keen on using all of the quality signals they have on hand, including things like Google+ interaction and `rel="author"` and `rel="publisher"` attributes to help guide them which sites can be considered top authorities within their niche. We can see these industry leaders already standing out from the crowd with testing that includes images now showing up within the search results.

SiegeMedia came across several [tests](#) that included the use of images pulled from G+ within the search results.

Instance 1: Google Search in South Africa for **flights** bringing up Travelstart in the listings with an image pulled from their G+ page. Travelstart has a confirmed G+ page but NO author tags in place on their site.



Instance 2: Google Search for **car insurance**, bringing up Progressive Insurance. Progressive is a well-known brand with a verified G+ page AND `rel=publisher` tags in place on their site.



Instance 3: Google search for **flight school** brought up a listing for a not-so-well-known brand PEA. PEA also has a G+ and they utilize the publisher markup on their site.



P.S: This seems to have stopped working as of now.

Summary - Since Google is testing these snippets in its SERPs, it's probably not too long before this feature is actually live. We strongly advise you not to neglect your G+ presence and keep marking up your pages with authorship.

4

GOOGLE'S ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES MOVING ADDRESS

On July 25, Jade Wang from Google listed a few helpful [instructions](#) for a business moving its address. Here's Google advice for "verified" business owners:

"Just clarifying our policy for businesses moving addresses. For verified business

- If your business is moving addresses, you should edit your address in your Google Places for Business dashboard or in the Google+ page admin area.
- In some cases, changing your address will simply edit the address on the existing page. In other cases, it will create a new page for the new address. This will happen automatically and is totally normal; don't worry! It might take a week or two after editing your address for a change to show up.
- Please note you may need to verify the new page.
- If a new page is created for your business, you may want to mark the old page (with the old location) as closed. Do so by visiting the page, clicking on **Report a problem**, and select "Place is permanently closed. Then, in the box that appears, paste the URL for the new page (with the new location), so we can establish a link between the two pages.

Please contact our support team ([here](#) or [here](#), click Contact Us) or start a new thread if you have questions or specific cases you would like assistance with. You can find more instructions on closing a location here: <http://goo.gl/YZljq>."

5

VIRTUAL OFFICES BEING TARGETED BY GOOGLE

Google is quietly targeting local businesses that are using virtual offices. To be clear, a virtual office is when a business rents out a space in an office building or shares an existing business' address but doesn't actually use it as a store front for their customers.



According to Google, there is only supposed to be one business under the same address in Google Places. The issue with the majority of virtual offices is that, in order to keep the cost low, they assign all businesses the same address and suite number.

Google clearly states that if your business location isn't a store front for your customers then you need to hide your address within your Google Places dashboard.

Needs Action  Rejected

What does this mean? Your listing did not adhere to our [Google Places quality guidelines](#) and has been deactivated.

Unfortunately, it is observed that, when the hammer does come down, it comes without warning or mercy. In such cases, it's better to be safe than sorry.

Below are some [quality guidelines](#) to consider when submitting a Business location straight from Google.

Business Location: Use a precise, accurate address to describe your business location.

- Do not create a listing or place your pin marker at a location where the business does not physically exist. P.O. Boxes are not considered accurate physical locations.
- If you need to specify a mail box or suite number within your physical location, please list your physical address in Address Line 1, and put your mail box or suite number in Address Line 2.
- Use the precise address for the business in place of broad city names or cross-streets.
- Do not create more than one listing for each business location, either in a single account or multiple accounts.
 - Individual practitioners may be listed individually as long as those practitioners are public-facing within their parent organization. Common examples of such practitioners are doctors, dentists, lawyers, and real estate agents. The practitioner should be directly contactable at the verified location during stated hours. A practitioner should not have multiple listings to cover all of his or her specializations.
 - Departments within businesses, universities, hospitals, and government buildings may be listed separately. These departments must be publicly distinct as entities or groups within their parent organization, and ideally will have separate phone numbers and/or customer entrances.
- Businesses that operate in a service area, as opposed to a single location, should not create a listing for every city they service. Businesses that operate in a service area should create one listing for the central office or location and designate service areas. [Learn how to add service areas to your listing.](#)
- If you don't conduct face-to-face business at your location, you must select "Yes, this business serves customers at their locations" under the "Service Areas and Location Settings" section of your dashboard, and then select the "Do not show my business address on my Maps listing" option.
- Do not include information in address lines that does not pertain to your business's physical location (e.g. URLs, keywords).
- Anytime the address for your business changes, you'll have to verify again. You also won't be able to update the business's name until the verification process is complete.

6

GOOGLE INCREASES SITELINKS TO 10 FOR SOME BRANDED DOMAIN SEARCHES

Just FYI, Google increased the number of possible sitelinks for domain searches from 4-6 to 10. Here's an example of a search for BritishAirways.com with 10 sitelinks showing within the results.

British Airways | Book Worldwide Flights & Holidays
www.britishairways.com/ ▼
Save on worldwide flights and holidays when you book directly with **British Airways**. Find great deals, manage your booking and check in online.

British Airways Plan your journey - Flight information - Help and contacts	Plan your journey Our route network - Flight class - More options - Tripseeker - ...
Manage My Booking Manage My Booking. Home. Manage My Booking. Woman ...	Flight information Find out more about the British Airways network, arrivals and ...
British Airways home Book flights to London, New York and many other international ...	Check-in You can also check-in on your mobile phone. More information ...
Checked baggage allowance These fares don't include a checked baggage allowance ...	Travel News Latest British Airways news on flights, arrivals and departures.
Arrivals and departures Arrivals and departures (flight status). Search by route; Search ...	India India - English. Where relevant you will see special offers and other ...

[More results from britishairways.com »](#)

Some of the other examples we researched include - Geico.com, Aetna.com, Moz.com, Apple.com, etc.

With so many new studies and with data being updated so often - it can be difficult to keep up. To make life a bit easier, Google has created the Databoard for Research Insights, which allows people to explore and interact with some of Google's recent research in a unique and immersive way.

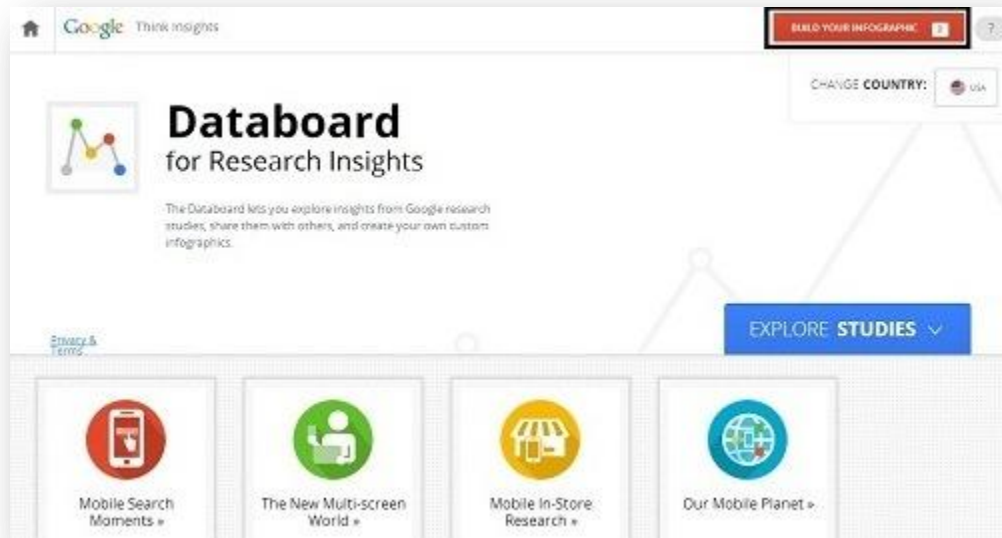


The Databoard is Google's response to three big challenges facing the vast majority of research released today.

Ease of consumption: The databoard introduces a new way of sharing data, with all of the information presented in a simple and beautiful way. Users can explore an entire study or jump straight to the topics or datapoints that they care about. The Databoard is also optimized for all devices so you can comfortably explore the research on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Shareability: Most people, when they find a compelling piece of data, want to share it. Whether it's with a colleague, client, or a community on a blog or social network, compelling insights and data are meant to be shared. The databoard is designed for shareability, allowing users to share individual charts and insights or collections of data with anyone through email or social networks.

A Cohesive Story: Most research studies set out to answer a specific question, like how people use their smartphones in store, or how a specific type of consumer shops. This means that businesses need to look across multiple pieces of research to craft a comprehensive business or marketing strategy. To address this need, the Databoard



The databoard is currently home to four research studies including **The New Multi-screen World**, **Mobile In-store shopper research**, **Mobile search moments**, and more.

8

FACEBOOK MIRRORS TWITTER'S TRENDING TOPICS

Just the buzz of Hashtags was not enough! And so finally Facebook comes up with “Trending topics” too. This will enable users to see topics that are being discussed by people. Facebook Trending topics are still in the beta phase, available only to few U.S users who use Facebook mobile site. That day is not so far when Facebook will come up with Promoted Trends as well.



Trending topics will work exactly the way Twitter Trends work. Popular topics with or without hashtags will appear at the top of the news feed & also their friends posts will be seen first, followed by public posts. This is not the first time where Facebook tried to imitate Twitter, right from mentions '@', verified accounts, follow button, hashtags & now Trending topics. Facebook is determined to mimic Twitter's popular features.

Looking at the other aspects related to Trending topics like contests, one can now reach to wider share of audience rather than just fans. With an added advantage i.e. without spending much on advertising. In fact, a brand with budget constraints will be able to do promotional campaigns on a larger scale.

Trending topics will persuade users to share their content publicly rather than just with friends or few selected people. This seems to be an effort towards encouraging the users to share the content publicly as it will display posts which are “Public”. If only, Facebook can manage to name Trending Topics differently, one will be able to relate to Facebook directly as opposed to Twitter look alike.