SEO

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Strategic Search Engine & Internet Marketing Solutions

SEO
NEWSLETTER

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I N D E X

1 Google's Introduces the Much Awaited Link Disavow Tool

After months of anticipation, On October 16, Google has finally released their own version of a link disavow tool integrated in Webmaster Tools which allows site owners to markdown bad links pointed at their websites. However, it should be noted that Google will take these disavowed links as "strong suggestions" as stated by Matt Cutts. This means that, most of the time, Google will oblige that you are providing them signals, but will not necessarily consider them unless Google reviews these URLs themselves.

The first step in identifying whether or not you should start disavowing is to ask yourself these questions:

- Has my site received "unnatural link" warnings from Google?
- Are my site/pages still indexed in the Google SERPs?
- Have I participated in questionable link building practices (buying links, spammy blog networks, automated "black hat" tactics, etc.)
- What anchor text is being used in my backlinks OR is there overuse of same anchor text in links pointing to your site?

Further Assess Which Links are Bad for your Site

First and foremost, get a list of backlinks and domains that you think might be responsible for the drop in rankings. The best place to start looking for such links is the "Links to your Site" section in Google's Webmaster Tools itself. You can also use premium tools like MajesticSEO or SEOMoz's Open Site Explorer tool.

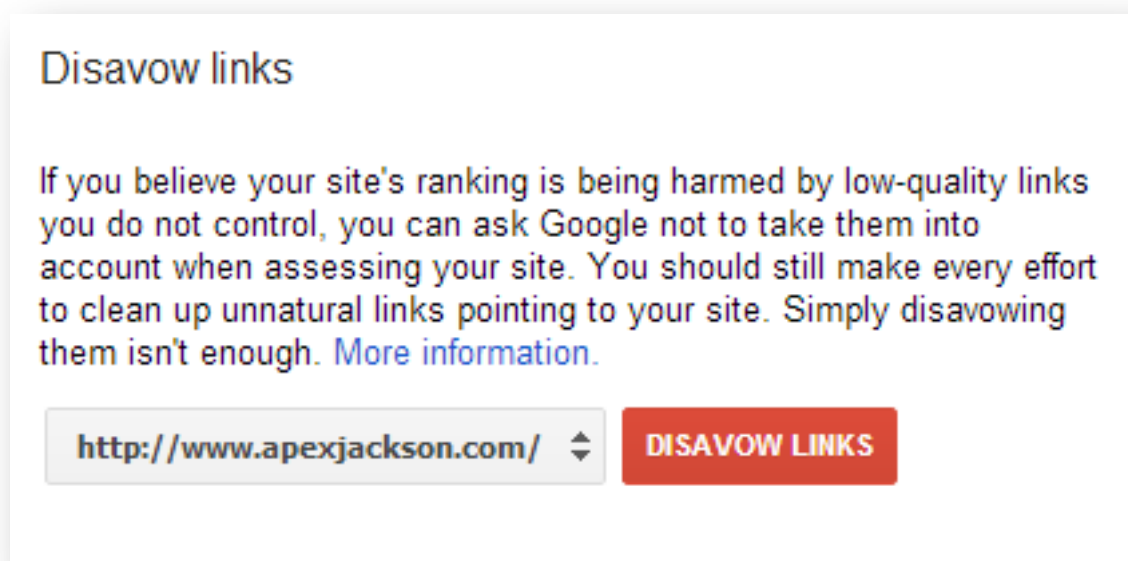**Below is the criteria to be considered while filtering down domains / URLs which need to be disavowed:**

- Too many links from a single domain (effect of template based footer or links).
- Too many links for the same anchor text (can be an effect of negative SEO).
- Links from completely un-related sites.

Start off with domains having thousands of links to your site. Maybe you'd be best focusing on a handful of your absolute worst links, disavowing them, and then waiting to see what happens.

The Disavow Tool in Action

Now that you have the final list, it's time to submit the domains and specific URLs in the disavow tool.

In Google Webmaster Tools (logged in with "Owner" level access), enter https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/disavow-links-main to get to this:

Disavow links

If you believe your site's ranking is being harmed by low-quality links you do not control, you can ask Google not to take them into account when assessing your site. You should still make every effort to clean up unnatural links pointing to your site. Simply disavowing them isn't enough. More information.

http://www.apexjackson.com/   **DISAVOW LINKS**

This text file to be submitted can be a combination of comments, links to block, and domains to block. It looks something like this:

```
# Contacted owner of spamdomain1.com on 7/1/2012 to
# ask for link removal but got no response
domain:spamdomain1.com
# Owner of spamdomain2.com removed most links, but missed
these
http://www.spamdomain2.com/contentA.html
http://www.spamdomain2.com/contentB.html
http://www.spamdomain2.com/contentC.html
```

There are only really three options at this point:

1. Use "#" for comments
2. Use full URLs on their own line to block a specific page
3. Use "domain:" followed by a root or sub-domain to block it

Once this is done, do not expect your rankings to boost overnight. According to Google, it needs to re-crawl and re-index the URLs you disavowed before your disavowals go into effect, which can take multiple weeks or even months!

Reactions

As per our initial research, the reactions across the SEO world have been mixed. Many people are happy about Google introducing the tool because they'll finally be able to remove associations with the websites in which they haven't been able to remove backlinks. Others think it's a complete waste of time.

Overall, we think the Google link disavow tool is a step in the right direction for webmasters. However, it's still too soon to track how effective the tool really is because the results of using the tool are still up in the air.

We think Google will definitely use this tool to compile lists of top 10 /100 / 1000 domains which are featured across multiple disavow requests. The next job would be to do a manual review of these complied domains.

Remember how Google deprecated search results for websites which had a lot of DMCA complaints against them? This is just another way to gather spam intelligence.

So, does that mean we will not use it? No! But we will use it cautiously ;)

We will obviously continue to monitor more websites and let you know our reactions and feedback in our upcoming newsletters about this tool.

2   Add Authorship Rich Snippets to Claim Your Content before It Slips Out Of Your Hand

Authorship rich snippets, which is almost a year old, is the little bit of code (rel=author) that gives you the opportunity to officially claim your content with Google. Doing this comes with 4 great benefits.

1. **Increases your click through rate.** When your content is marked up properly, Google includes your G+ profile image next to the listing within the search results. There have been countless studies indicating this increases your listing's click through rate. People are naturally inclined to look at images in a body of text. For example take a look below:
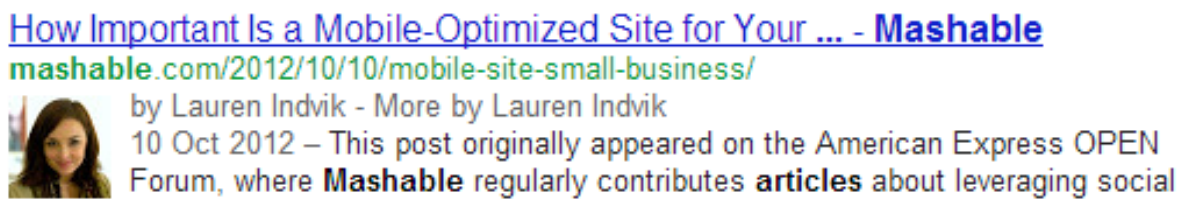
2. **Protects Your Content.** This code also tells Google that you are the "original" owner. If your article gets picked up and reprinted Google is more likely to see your marked up article as the original and de-value the rest.

3. **Increases your content's authority and trust.** This is the most important reason to markup your content. When you officially claim your content using this code and tying it to your G+ profile you're also building up your own personal brand. The more trusted, quality content you produce for authoritative sites - the stronger your brand becomes in the eyes of Google, as well as within your Industry.

4. **Will possible improve your rankings.** Google might use authorship as a ranking factor. If Google recognizes you as a popular contributor, your content will probably rank higher.

In 2004 Google filed a patent for a system so that

> "...more well-received and popular 'agents' could have their associated content rank higher than unsigned content or the content of other less-authoritative agents."

This patent forms the base for Author Rank which is based on any other factors such as +1's, shares per post, number of circlers, comments per post, posting frequency, engagement level, authority on non-Google social networks, etc.

Google released this Authorship form that allows you to officially register yourself as an author within G+. Upon testing this form, it took about a week for the snippets we were once struggling with to start showing up in the search results.

Get Your Authorship Snippets Showing in the SERPs in 5 Simple Steps:

1. Be sure your rel=author snippets are in order on your sites. Google has great directions on that within their Content Guidelines. This is a simple line of code, so don't be scared off.

2. Use Google's Structured Data Testing Tool to be sure your snippets are written like they should be.

3. Fill out Google's Authorship form using an email address that matches the domain of your most important content. For example: yourname@yourdomain.com

4. Go to your G+ Profile and click **Edit** then scroll down and be sure that you have the main domains you contribute to listed under **Contributor To**.

5. That's it! Just check the SERPs in a week or so for a piece of content that you've added the markup to and you'll see your hard work has paid off.

Once officially set up with Google you can quickly see your face coming up for all the sites you contribute to - even if you haven't claimed them within G+.

Once Author Rank comes into effect it's going change the way content providers are getting ranked. These changes may be a concern for those relying on spammy linking schemes and unwanted content, but people providing valuable content will enjoy the benefits. Author Rank will allow for a more trustworthy and efficient way of ranking your articles in the search results.

3   Google Survey Reveals What Users Expect From Mobile Sites

According to a recent survey by Google, it has asserted that smart-phone owners want sites to be optimized for their smaller screens and are inclined to abandon those that aren't. The data about features and capabilities that people want from mobile sites, including some specific things by vertical, are very interesting.

Bad Experiences Hurt the Brand

We know from considerable past research that mobile users often get frustrated by sites that are not restructured for mobile phones or tablets. Google's survey fortifies this fact:

- 72% of users said that mobile-friendly sites were important to them; however 96% had encountered sites that were not

- 74% of respondents said they're more likely to revisit mobile-friendly sites

- A majority of users (67%) are more likely to buy or convert after a visit to a mobile-friendly site, while the opposite is also true of a non-mobile-friendly site: 61% say they'll "move on"

- 55% said a frustrating experience on a (mobile) website would hurt the perception of the brand

What Users Expect From Mobile Sites

Users expect mobile websites to load in under five seconds according to the survey findings. However, the faster the better.

The following graphic drills down on specific design and usability elements that people want from mobile sites.

Tasks Vary by Vertical

The survey explores several verticals and corresponding mobile user behaviors in Banking, Travel, Retail and Automotive verticals. Below are the "most important tasks" users want to be able to perform or accomplish on mobile websites in each category according to the survey.

Banking & Finance:

- Check account balances: 77%
- Get directions or operating hours: 65%
- Log into an account: 61%
- Pay bills: 51%
- Transfer money: 51%

Travel:

- Check flight status: 78%
- Get directions or operating hours: 74%
- Check in for a flight or confirm a reservation: 69%
- Find a business location: 65%
- Log in to an account: 64%
- Search for flight times, hotels, car rentals: 63%
- Find a phone number or email address: 57%

Automotive:

- Get directions or operating hours: 66%
- Contact a dealer: 62%
- Make a service appointment: 55%

This study makes it clear that mobile adoption is growing quickly and expectations of mobile sites are also rising. If your business mostly depends on attracting new customers through "Search", it's high time to take mobile SEO in a serious manner.

Worried? We can help you!

We have developed our own platform to design and develop mobile sites. Integrated completely within our SEO Dashboard, we offer a wide range of features for your mobile website like:

- User Friendly Mobile Website Design and Development
- QR Codes and Tracking with Scan Analytics
- Professional Grade Website Analytics
- Social Media Sharing
- Mapping & GPS
- Dashboard Management
- Click-To-Call, Click-To-SMS and Click-To-Email

Below are few examples of mobile sites we have created:
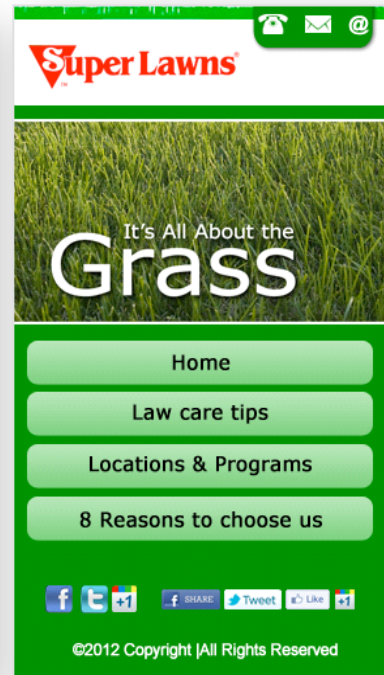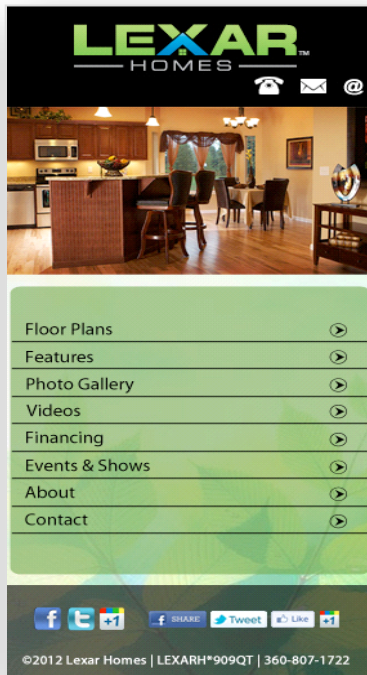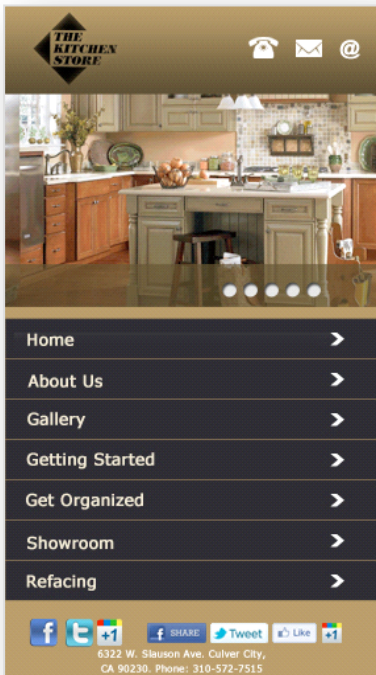
For any inquiries or questions concerning this service, please contact us directly via the SEO Dashboard.

4   Google Introduces New "Tag Manager" To Simplify Your Code & Improve Your Site Speed

Managing all those different tracking tags on your site just got easier with Google's [announcement](#) of their new Tag Manager!

You can now insert just one JavaScript tag to replace all of the individual tags that you may be currently using for Google Analytics, advertising or tracking purposes. Once the JavaScript tag is in place, you can add the appropriate tracking tags into the Tag Manager interface without having to add additional source code to your site saving time and increasing your site speed.The free tool will be a big help to large scale sites or companies with multiple Web sites to manage. If you use a lot of advanced or customized Google Analytics tags then you can already recognize the benefits.

Setting Up Your Account

Get started with your account here: www.google.com/tagmanager/

We recommend that you think of your Tag Manager account like you do your Google Analytics account - one account per company. Once your Account is set up then you can create a Container which creates the JavaScript code you'll have to add to your site. A good practice is to have one container for each domain. The code generated should be installed across your entire site and placed immediately after the opening body tag of each page.

Once the container is in place you can add tags from Google Analytics, AdWords, Custom HTML, Custom Image and DoubleClick. You'll then need to decide which pages you'd like each tag to load on. The default selection is all pages which loads the tag on every page where the JavaScript code is installed. Once the tags are in place there's a Preview mode that allows you to check your changes before publishing them.

Google's Tag Manager also offers the Debug Console and the Version History so that you can verify that the tags you've added don't break your site before they go live.

Once, you're satisfied that your tags are ready to publish, select Create Version and then Save and Publish. This will make the tags active on your site.

Here's a brief video Google put together explaining Tag Manager if you'd to check it out.

Video Link - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRvbFpeZ11Y

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