SEO
Search Engine Optimization
-3-

Prof. Romina Eramo

University of Teramo

Department of Communication Sciences

reramo@unite.it

Off-Page Factors: Popularity

- Popularity is among the factors that most influence search engine positioning .

- A few years ago the Research Engines were based only on internal factors of the pages (keyword density, keyword position, keyword emphasis, meta-tags, ...) but now popularity is absolutely decisive in positioning.

External Links: Outbound Links

- **Linking yes, but with judgement!**

- Outbound links are those links inserted into the pages of a site that point to external sites .

- Offering a link to another site increases the Link Popularity of the linked site and increases the probability that that site will be more easily identified by engines or more frequently visited by spiders . It is therefore good practice to offer links only to sites that really deserve this small favor.

External Links: Outbound Links

- **An outbound link** , if exploited to the fullest, **can also produce beneficial results for those who offer it** .

- **Offering links to anyone** , regardless of who the beneficiary of the link is, **can lead to negative effects for your website** .

- A good way to take advantage of the positive effects of an outbound link is to offer it to a website that deals with similar or related topics to those discussed on the page hosting the link .

External Links: Outbound Links

- In recent years, several search engines have tried to develop technologies aimed at identifying the " **theme** " of a web page, i.e. **the main topic** that is discussed on the page.

- To strengthen the theme of a page it may be a good idea to include a link to the page of another site that discusses similar topics . Even better , if the site you are pointing to is considered an " **authoritative** " or in any case "popular" site .

External Links: Outbound Links

- Example of a page that talks about bicycles:

- *...A real cyclist personally takes care of small repairs to his bike that go beyond the simple puncture of an inner tube. It is therefore important to identify a trusted company for the supply of* **<A HREF="http://www.bikesworld.it/">** *spare parts for bicycles* **</A>** *, capable of providing assistance and advice on the purchase of spare parts and accessories...*

External Links: Outbound Links

- An optimal use of an outbound link occurs when the link points to a specific page, whose textual contents are strictly themed and match as much as possible with those of the page from which the link starts .

- **An outbound link therefore should not be granted lightly to any site!**

- It is good practice to check the sites to which a link is offered, with the aim of identifying any techniques aimed at achieving prominent positions on search engines, through the use of tricks and expedients that are unwelcome to the engines.

External Links: Outbound Links

- Always refuse links to dubious sites : in addition to protecting yourself from possible penalties from search engines, you actively contribute to improving user navigation.

- Only recommend websites that in our opinion deserve to be visited based solely on their contents.

External Links: Outbound Links

- Text Link Checker Tool:
  https://www.softwaretestinghelp.com/broken-link-checker/ Checks links across an entire site for malicious links

- To check external links
  - Xenu 's Link Sleuth or Integrity (mac)
  - http://wummel.github.io/linkchecker/
  - gURLChecker written in C, last updated February 22, 2011 (version 0.13.1)
  - W3C Link Checker is an online service, but source is available, last updated 2011
  - webcheck written in Python, last updated September 11, 2010 (version 1.10.4)
  - webgrep written in Perl, last updated April 2004 (version 2.12)

- In-depth links:
  Do Outbound Links Matter for SEO (and more)
  SEO Case Study: Outbound Links .

External Links: Outbound Links

5 simple rules :

- Carefully check who we link to by doing a mini SEO analysis, and in particular :
    - the contents of the page
    - its outgoing links (and also incoming ones
    - the general theme of the site
    - its seniority and its PageRank

- Check the SERP
  If it comes out among the first places in Google for the keyword of our interest

External Links: Outbound Links

- Use a relevant anchor text
  link using an ' anchor that includes the keys of interest to us

- Periodically check external links,
  linked pages may disappear or change content

- Check moderated comments
  and immediately delete comments with links to malicious sites

Link Popularity and BackLinks

- Increasing popularity on search engines essentially means increasing incoming *backlinks to our site.*

- By **site popularity** we mean all the aspects that spread awareness and make the *brand* and the services or products it offers known.

- Let's start from an assumption:
  Not all backlinks are the same!

- For example, there are **" sterilized " links** , such as those that include the rel *=nofollow* attribute , which, not being followed by the engines, do not influence the rank.

Link Popularity and BackLinks

- Or there are **" bought " links** : there is a strong doubt that Google does not take such links as valid for ranking purposes , and therefore considers them null.

- There are links coming from areas completely **out of context** compared to ours, from foreign sites (for example you run the risk of having the **language** changed if you receive too many " foreign " links)

- Finally there are links coming from **spam resources** : it is better to avoid being linked to by this type of site to avoid running the risk of being seen by Google as part of a spam site network.

Link Popularity and BackLinks

- The Research Engines try to give importance only to *links* that offer an advantage to the user and which really appear to be an advice from the *webmaster* to visit a valid resource and in context with the page we are visiting .

- The Research Engines are investing heavily to determine whether a *link* is spontaneous, or whether it is the result of a sale, an exchange or in any case arose from agreements for the sole purpose of increasing the *popularity* of the site.

Link Popularity and BackLinks

- It is very important to receive *spontaneous links that can truly be useful to users* , of quality, from themed resources, keeping away from those who do spam, trade or various exchanges.

- Another aspect not to be underestimated when we plan the growth of backlinks for our site: the **time factor.**

- Search engines , Google first and foremost, take into account the natural growth of *backlinks* : constant but diluted over time.

Link Popularity and BackLinks

- If our site receives 1000 *backlinks* in this month and then for the following twelve months it does not receive any *backlinks* , for Research Engines it means that our site was important only for that period, perhaps due to a particular event that struck and attracted users and the general interest.

- This doesn't mean those 1000 *backlinks* will be lost. They will certainly have brought a higher popularity with the consequent rise in the *SERPs* of search engines but, probably, we could then suffer a decline in the following months.

Link Popularity and BackLinks

- **To achieve good popularity, it is important that a site consistently receives *spontaneous links* from quality, themed resources. *Links* that are truly useful to users, keeping away from those who *spam* .**

Anchor Text and

- that MoRs take into consideration in their algorithms to position a site is the Anchor text , i.e. the text inserted between the Anchor Tags.

- Ex: Holidays in Sicily In the example our Text Anchor is " Holidays in Sicily " , and indicates to visitors that the proposed web page deals with topics relating to holidays in Sicily.

Anchor Text and

- Research Engines use this text in their algorithms to define the topic of the landing page and assign considerable importance to it, sometimes more than the page content and meta tags.

- Some web pages are positioned in the top positions in the Research Engines for very competitive keywords, thanks to the fact that they receive many links that have as Anchor Text the very keyword for which they are well positioned.

Anchor Text and

- **Anchor text push** : *Below we provide a list of all-inclusive [holiday packages in Sicily .](#)*

- **Generic anchor text** : *[On this page](#) we provide you with a list of all-inclusive holiday packages in Sicily.*

- **Generic anchor text** : *To find out the list of all-inclusive holiday packages in Sicily [click here](#) .*

Anchor Text and

It 's important :

- use keywords in natural language links *(you get better results than links made up of meaningless keywords)*

- optimize the text of links both internal to your site *(menus and links in the text)* and external *(those received)*

Anchor Text and

- get a link to the most relevant website page for that specific topic and not always the homepage

- be linked within a sentence or a long thematic text , rather than inserting a dry link, perhaps in a section specifically for links

Anchor Text and

- If you need to get links from 10 different sites, it is important to provide 10 different phrases, but above all 10 different anchor texts, in order to use different keywords, increasing the naturalness of the links, but also to help search engines give you wider coverage on the keyword.

- Even better is to have different pages linked with different keywords, in order to increase the relevance of the individual pages of your site to the themes of the pages from which the links come.

Anchor Text and

- External links help your site gain relevance for the keywords mentioned in the link text . And when the number of these incoming links increases, your site's ranking for searches for those keywords typically increases as well.

- **Ultimately, to significantly improve your natural positioning on Google, you don't need a lot of links, but a few of extreme quality and trust. If among these there are many themed ones with the page being linked, we've hit the jackpot!**

Anchor Text and

- When requesting a link from outside, always provide your own HTML code for "copy and paste".

- Interesting article: *What are the factors relating to links that characterize the success of a site in Google rankings?*
  Complete survey of 30 experts
  https:// www.giacomobruno.it /i-segreti-degli-outbound-links-e-backlink-per-il-pagerank-e-il-link-popularity/

Popularity without Links

- Popularity isn't just affected by *links* .

- For *Google* , *Bing* and *Ask* , other techniques are used that require user involvement (User Experience):
  - *how you arrive at a website,*
  - *how much you visit it,*
  - *how you navigate it.*

- This is all data that could partially influence the popularity and therefore the position of sites in search engines .

- By using this " natural " data the risk of *spam* is particularly low.