

Black Hat SEO For Beginners

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Introduction

If you have a website from which you are trying to make money, you must have visitors to that site in order to do so.

It is a little like having a store in the local high street or shopping mall. If no-one ever finds your store and wanders inside, then it does not matter how classy your products are, or how competitive your prices, you will never make any sales until you start pulling in potential customers.

The same rules apply in the world of online business. No visitors to your site is exactly the same as no potential customers walking into your real-world store and no sales.

Therefore, you need to adopt tactics and methods that will make sure that your site enjoys hundreds or perhaps even thousands of visitors a day.

There are lots of different ways of doing this, and once your business becomes better established, you should use every traffic generation tactic that you know of to maximize the number of visitors that you enjoy.

However, some of the quickest and most effective ways of getting people to visit your sales page are the ones that cost money as well, and that may be money that you don't have available right now.

For example, using the AdWords Pay-Per-Click online advertising program from Google will have visitors landing on your page within a matter of hours, so it is extremely effective in these terms. However, unless you know exactly what you are doing when you create your AdWords campaign, it can be a very expensive way of attracting visitors, and the number of new internet marketers who have been severely 'burned' by their first few AdWords campaigns are legion.

There is another factor that you need to consider as well. Online advertising program like AdWords are still extremely effective, but they are becoming less so as people become more aware that when they see 'Sponsored Links' on a page, it means that they are looking at paid advertising.

People in general and internet users in particular seem to have an increasing aversion to visiting sites that use paid advertising to promote their products and services, perhaps because they believe that sites that pay to advertise will always be those that are trying to sell them something.

Despite what those of us who run internet-based businesses might like to believe, most people do not surf the internet with the intention of buying

anything. They do so to seek information and answers to the questions that they have, and as a general rule they are trying to find that information for free. Considered in the light of this factor, it makes sense that people would avoid clicking on adverts wherever possible.

At the same time, however, the way that these information seekers look for the information that they want is pretty much cast in stone as well. They will open up their favorite search engine, type in the word or phrase that they want to search for and hit the 'Enter' key.

This will bring up a page of search engine results that shows them the top ten most popular sites that are related to that phrase on the left-hand side of the page, together with a handful of adverts on the right-hand side.

Extensive recent research has shown that searchers almost always click on the top results on the left-hand side of the page, and then work their way through those top ten results to find what they are looking for.

If they cannot find the information that they are seeking by doing this, then they might click on an advert, or they could move to the second page of the results and look at the natural (organic) search results that are featured in positions 11-20 for the term that they searched.

If you can get your site pages into the top ten or twenty of the natural search engine results, the chances of your being able to pull visitors are very good. Of course, that is everyone else's objective as well, so the competition for those coveted top ten spots can be extremely fierce.

Despite that competition, you must do everything that you can to get your page featured, and one of the ways that you do this is through the application of what are known as search engine optimization (or SEO) tactics to the creation of your pages. Some such SEO tactics are known as 'white hat' tactics, while others are sometimes called 'gray hat' and then there are 'black hat' SEO tactics. It is with the latter in particular that this book is concerned, so the first thing to look at is, what exactly are black hat SEO tactics?

Just like the movies...

As in the 'Western' cowboy movies of old, the concept of black and white hat tactics is supposed to differentiate between the good guys and the bad. However, it is important to understand who it is that defines those who are the good guys wearing the white hats and the baddies who wear the black.

The first and perhaps most important point to make about those who use black hat tactics is that they are not doing anything that is illegal (at least, the majority of them are not) and in most cases, the tactics they adopt to make sure that their website features well in the search engine results are not even unethical.

However, the search engines have rules about what they deem to be acceptable promotional and marketing practices, and they deem anything that falls outside those rules to be black hat. In other words, those who are using black hat tactics are not necessarily doing anything wrong, it is just that they are breaking or bending the rules that are imposed on the way that they use the internet by Google or Yahoo!.

It is therefore reasonable to ask a few questions here.

First, why do the mega-rich corporations like Google or Yahoo! believe that they have any right to impose rules on other internet users? They do not own the internet, although behavior such as imposing rules might suggest that they believe otherwise.

Secondly, who are these rules that are fairly arbitrarily created by the search engine overlords designed to benefit?

Of course, the search engine people will proclaim that they impose these rules to protect their users, and to ensure that they enjoy a high-quality experience whenever they use that particular search engine.

There is some truth in this, because the quality of the results that the search engines return has definitely been improving over the past couple of years. That being said, however, there is no doubt that the major beneficiaries of this imposition of rules and regulations have been the owners and shareholders of sites like Google and Yahoo!

For this reason, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with applying black hat tactics to the site optimization process, although it is, of course, up to each individual site owner to decide what is acceptable to them and what is not. As intimated earlier, there are some serious black hat experts whose practices and behavior do border on the illegal, but this book is not

concerned with those sorts of tactics, simply because they are way too dangerous for any black hat beginner to get involved in.

What I am going to cover, however, are most of the basic black hat tactics that marketers are using to get their sites into the top ten search results, so that you know how it is done.

The people who run the major search engines are not very happy when people use tactics that bend or break their rules. Thus, it is a fairly common occurrence for sites to be found by the search engine spiders and listed in the results (known as 'indexing'), only to then be de-listed fairly soon after as it is discovered that they are using black hat tactics.

However, while the site is still indexed and is ranking reasonably well in the search engine results, it should be making good money for you, so one of your objectives should be to keep the site live as long as possible by avoiding detection.

That is one of the secrets of a successful black hat SEO policy, and something that you are going to learn considerably more about in this book.

Getting set up correctly

Every day, there are hundreds or perhaps thousands of people from all points of the globe who decide that they would like to try their hand at making money online.

Some of these people will be successful but the vast majority will not, and one of the biggest differences between the two groups is that the people who are successful work to a plan and tend to be extremely well organized as well.

One other thing that they all do without fail is track all of the information that they can lay their hands on about their site visitors, because that is the information that allows them to tweak and finesse their marketing efforts so that they become ever more successful.

Perhaps you have never thought about this, but any time you visit a web site, you leave a very large amount of information about your visit on that site when you leave.

If you have your own website, you can test this for yourself by looking at any inbuilt stats programs that your webhost includes in your account package.

For example, if your webhost provides a cPanel through which you manage your site, look for the 'Web/FTP Stats' icon, and click it, and log into any of the stats programs that you find there.

What Awstats will tell you is just about everything there is to know about the people who visit your site – what operating system and web browser those people are using, the countries and sites that they come from, what keywords are driving traffic to your site, how long people are staying on your pages and so on.

In other words, every time someone visits your site, almost everything that they do while they are there is recorded for you.

Exactly the same will happen when you visit other people's sites as well. However, if the money-making sites that you are building are black hat, then

you want to minimize the 'footprint' that you leave anywhere on the net as far as possible.

Here are some of the steps that you can take to do this.

Make your black hat domain names private

When you first start to build your black hat sites, each one should be built using a new domain name that you have registered specifically for the purpose of building that site.

If you do not have a favorite domain name register, I recommend cheap-domainregistration.com, because, as the name would suggest, they are cheap, but they are also extremely efficient as well.

As you can see from this, at the time of writing, .com domain names are available for \$6.95.

While under normal circumstances, if you were building a site that you want to use for several years, a .com domain would always be the best choice, in this case, the fact is that most black hat sites tend to be around for a relatively short time.

For this reason, even a .info domain should do the job perfectly well, and these are available for only \$1.99 per year.

Note also that to the left of the table shown above, it mentions that 'Private Registration' is available for \$8.95 per year. This is something that you really should add to every domain that you register for purposes that are in any way black hat, because it means that all of your personal information is kept entirely private.

Otherwise, anyone who discovers that you are doing something with a site that the search engines don't like can do what is known as a '[Whois](#)' search to find out all of the personal information that you must register if you do not add Private Registration to your domain.

If, therefore, you are using a .info domain name, then you are looking at a total bill of \$10.94 per year for your new URL.

Incidentally, it is normally recommended that you register new domains for at least two years, rather than just one, as that makes the search engines take the site that you build under that domain a little more seriously. That is not a consideration here, so one-year registration for your site is fine, but don't leave your self-open by ignoring Private Registration.

Use a friendly web host

Not all web hosts are happy with customers who use their services to build black hat sites, primarily because if you do so using their shared hosting services (which, as they are the cheapest hosting service, you almost certainly will) your black hat activities might lead to one of their IP addresses getting black listed.

That can cause problems for them, as it can have an adverse effect on the account of any other customers to whom they have allocated the same IP address.

So, it is important to choose a web host who will at least turn a blind eye to your black hat activities, and not close your site (and possibly your account) at the slightest hint of trouble.

There is going to be an element of guesswork involved here, as no web host is going to actively encourage people to use them for black hat activities because of the risks to their own business if you should choose to do so.

However, there are some hosting forum sites available where you can find out what hosts other people are using, such as the excellent [Web Hosting Talk](#) forum. Take a look there to see what hosts other people are currently recommending.

Hiding behind proxies

When you connect directly to a website, you leave very clear signs that you have been there, as previously established.

If, however, you connect to the net through what is known as a proxy server, the picture can be very different.

Basically, when you connect to the net using a proxy server, what you are doing is routing that connection through another computer or network of computers, so that any information that is left on sites which you visit is related to the computer through which you were routed, not your machine or IP address.

There are different types of proxy server, however, and you have to make sure that you are using the right type if you want to hide what you are doing. For example, a transparent proxy server does not hide anything about you and so the site that you visit will be able to see all of your information in the normal way.

If, however, you use an anonymous or (better yet) a highly anonymous or elite proxy server, then the site that you visit or the person to whom you send e-mail while using the proxy will get to know nothing about you. The other advantage of using a proxy server is that, because the proxy acts as a 'gateway' through which all incoming and outgoing data must pass to and from your computer, you are generally protected against viruses, Trojans, key loggers, spyware and other forms of malware.

The only problem with using proxy servers is that sometimes, the computer that was or is acting as a proxy for you gets turned off, and so you lose your connection. For this reason, it is important that, no matter how you access an anonymous proxy server, the information that you are using (and specifically the URL of the proxy that you are connected to) was tested in the past few minutes.

There are a few different ways that you can find up-to-date proxy server lists that are available for you to use.

Option one is to buy software that will go out and find live proxy server sites for you whenever you want to be online in a totally anonymous fashion. The advantage of a program like [Proxy Finder](#) is that you will therefore always know that the proxy you are trying to use is live and online, but the program does cost money.

The next option is to use one of the proxy sites listed on a site like [this one](#). Simply click on any link on the page to be taken to a proxy site, type in the URL of the site that you want to view and hit the 'Enter' button.

The third option, and my personal favorite, is to download and install a free plug-in for the Firefox web browser that allows you to be online entirely anonymously with just a few clicks of your mouse.

The plug-in or add-on is called Proxysel, and can be downloaded for [free here](#). Install it and then restart Firefox to activate the software.

You should now see a window that looks a little like this at the top of the screen, except yours will be empty, as you have not 'loaded up' any proxy servers yet. That is therefore the next job.

Go to [Checked Proxy Lists](#) and scroll down the page until you see the area where the various different lists are available.

The file that you need to use is the one right at the top, the 'high anonymous proxy list'.

Download the detailed CSV file by clicking the link in the brackets. Now, go back to the Proxysel window at the top of your browser and left click on the word 'Proxysel' itself. Next, hit 'Import - Export Proxylist' > 'Import List' > 'and overwrite Proxylist'.

Look for the CSV file that you just downloaded and click on it in the window to add it to Proxysel.

You should now see confirmation that all of the proxy addresses that were contained in the CSV have been added to the program, and if you click on the dropdown icon to the right of the Proxysel window, you should be able to see the complete list of proxies that you just added.

To use any of the proxies listed, highlight the one that you want to activate and click on the tiny monitor icon to the right of the Proxysel window.

And you should also see the numerical IP address displayed at the bottom right of your browser screen as well.

Note that in the list that I have just added, not all of the proxies are in the same country. That is a good thing, as it allows you to be online with the appearance of being in different places, which pretty obviously makes you even more anonymous.

The thing that I particularly like about using Proxysel is that it allows you to change the proxy server that you are using every few minutes by simply clicking the server that you are currently using off and choosing a different one.

This ability to switch server quickly and very simply is one thing that most experts in the art of keeping your online tracks hidden recommend as being something that you should do. Proxysel makes it remarkably easy, without having to spend any money on software to do the job for you.

Incidentally, if you want to take your anonymity even higher, you can download an additional security program known as [Tor](#), and then activate it

any time you want to use it by clicking on the tiny yellow brown 'Tor' icon to the right of the monitor icon in the previous screen shot.

Using Tor in addition to routing everything through one of the high anonymous proxies can sometimes slow things down a little, but it also significantly increases your security as well, which for any black hatter is always something that you should strive to do.

Focusing on natural search results

As previously suggested, the idea when creating any web site, black hat or white, is to get as many visitors to your site as you can pull from the natural search engine results, those on the left-hand side of the results page.

The way that this is most commonly done is through optimizing your site so that people will find it when they search, and the way that this is normally achieved is by matching your site to the search terms that people use.

We will look at how that is done in a little more detail later, but for now the important thing to understand is that in order for this to be possible, you need to know what those search words or terms are. Furthermore, you must find the terms and phrases that people use that most strongly indicate that they might be interested in whatever product or service you are promoting on your webpage.

In internet marketing parlance, you need to do some keyword research. Imagine that you are promoting an e-book that is a detailed guide to 'grooming Persian cats'.

You might think that people who are searching the web using just the single word 'cats' might be a good target market for you, but you be wrong for a couple of reasons.

The first reason is that someone who is searching using nothing more than 'cats' is almost certainly looking for broad information at the most general level. They are certainly not doing anything to indicate that they might be interested in buying a detailed information product like yours.

The second reason is that someone who uses the word 'cats' is not looking for information that is specifically about Persian cats, because if they were, then that would have been the search term that they used.

Add these two reasons together and you have someone that is 99.99% certain not to buy your e-book even though, in theory at least, they are a 'cat person'.

You need to focus your promotional efforts on people who are looking for far more specific information. So, the terms that you should be using with your site are phrases like 'persian cats', 'persian cat grooming' and so on. There are two quick searches that you can now do to give you an indication of how easy or difficult it is going to be to draw visitors to your site using those terms.

First, have a look at a Google search to see how many other sites are competing for that same phrase.

That is quite a lot of results, but the figure shown is telling only half the story. What you really want to find out is the number of sites that use the exact phrase Persian cats, whereas what you are seeing here is a list of all the individual web pages that mention Persian cats - so there may be sites that have several pages featured in these results.

What you need to know is how many sites are competing against you, so you click on the Google 'Advanced Search'.

Change the number of results per page that you want to have displayed to 100, scroll to the bottom of the first results page that you see and go straight to the last page.

And at the bottom of the page, you will find the explanation as to why there are now only 849 results being shown.

So, you have filtered out all the other pages that appear to be from the same or similar sites, meaning that you are up against only 849 other sites. Next, take a look at the free keyword research tool from [Wordtracker](#). This will show you approximately how many searches there are per day for any keyword or phrase you type in.

There are 729 searches a day for phrases and terms that include the words 'persian + cats'. More importantly, as you can see, Wordtracker will tell you exactly what these key terms or phrases are, so that you know what terms to focus your site on.

What you would then do is create a new page on your site for every phrase that you are targeting and monetize every one of those pages. The exact way that you would do that quickly and simply using either free or paid software is something we will look at in more detail later.

SEO never stands still

No matter whether it is black hat or white hat search engine optimization techniques that you are considering using, the fact is that SEO never stands still.

As web site design evolves and the search engine spiders become ever more sophisticated and 'smart', the SEO tactics that are most effective develop over time as well. For that reason, things that might have worked a year or two ago will not necessarily work now.

As an example, a 'classic' black hat technique that used to be very effective was to take the keywords or phrases that you just discovered and add them to the pages of your site, but in text that was the same color as your page background.

In this way, your human visitors could not see them, and so their viewing experience while visiting your page was not disturbed. However, the search engine spiders could see them, and so they would index those pages for the 'invisible' keywords that were included on your page, and that would drive visitors to your site.

As far as the search engine people were concerned, this was cheating their system because you were not doing anything that improved the quality of the experience for your visitor, while you were pulling in visitors that, as far as they were concerned, you did not 'merit'.

Now the spiders that the search engines send out to your site can 'see' whether the text on your page is visible or not, so this tactic no longer works. Incidentally, if you are interested in knowing what search engine spiders are visiting your site, and how often, you can find out from the stats programs that are built into the management panel of your site.

And, if you don't have access to such information through your own site management system, you can add the [Google Analytics](#) code to your pages for free, and that will tell you.

Even if you are going to adopt black hat SEO techniques to build your pages, not everything that you do is going to be stuff that is likely to upset the good folk at Google, Yahoo and MSN. In fact, there are many things that you

should do that are totally acceptable to the search engines, because they are designed to do little more than make their jobs easier!

These strictly white hat SEO tactics include:

- Making sure that your site has an accurate site map, and that the map is linked to from your home page. This helps the search engine spiders navigate their way around your site easily, and that ensures that every page should get indexed. There are many sites that allow you to create good quality HTML and text site maps for free ([here](#) and [here](#) are a couple of examples), and the advantage of using them is that the HTML coding they produce is likely to be accurate and search engine friendly as well.
- The major search engines like to see various pages clearly linked to from any sales page that is featured on your site. These would include a 'Terms of Service' page, an 'Earnings Disclaimer' and a 'Contact' form as well. Leaving these off your site means that your page is definitely not as search engine friendly as it should be.
- Make certain that the internal linking structure of your site works properly, and that everything links to where it should go. This will again help the search engine spiders find where they are going when they visit your site, and ensures that all of the pages that you want to be found are found.
- Sometimes, you may be using stylized pages (e.g. a self hosted [Wordpress blog](#)) for your page. If so, make sure that it does not have 'nofollow' tags enabled, as that would mean that the spiders did not follow any links from that page. Instead, you need the 'dofollow' tags to be in place, and to do this in Wordpress you can simply download and install the [dofollow plug-in](#).
- Each page must have an appropriate Title that contains the keyword phrase which you are targeting in the HTML (or whatever coding format you are using) of the page.
- In your HTML coding, there should be a meta-description, as this is the phrase that appears beneath the Title of your site in the search engine results pages.
- On the visible page, there should be a Headline that tells the visitor what is happening on your page. This is possibly the most important part of the page copy, and you should therefore take time to get it

right, and to ensure that it contains your key phrase. This should be in H1 or H2 font size as well.

- Beneath that there should be a sub-headline that adds to the description that you began 'building' in the headline.
- The on-page density of your keyword phrase should be between 4-8%. Anything less than that and you are not optimizing your page for that keyword phrase, anything more than that will make the search engine spiders believe that you might be 'keyword stuffing' your page, which was another black hat technique that people used to use that no longer works.

As suggested earlier, all of these SEO techniques are perfectly acceptable white hat SEO tactics that any sensible web master must adopt to ensure that their web pages are found and properly indexed by the search engine spiders.

Now, we are going to move into the realms of black hat SEO, why you might want to use it and how you can go about doing so.

Why use black hat SEO tactics?

If you wanted to use your web site to make money and planned to do so in a way that followed the rules that Google and Yahoo want you to follow – if you were creating a white hat site, in other words – then you would build that site in a certain way. In particular, every page of your site would be filled with the kind of quality content that the search engines love, unique materials that are regularly and constantly updated.

This sort of white hat site would probably make money for you, but it will take time to do so, and that may not be time that you want to take before you start seeing the cash come in.

I want to start earning now!

What if you wanted to start making money straight away, and were not particularly concerned how you did so? Imagine, for example, that instead of a high quality, content filled site, you were to build a site that had little or no quality content, one that was filled with little but advertising materials, for example?

That site would probably make money too, especially if the ads were all Pay-Per-Click so that every time somebody clicked on the advert on your page, you got paid. The problem would be that such a site would have no quality as far as the search engines are concerned, and they would be unlikely to index the pages that you were building.

This in turn means that your site does not feature in the natural search engine results, and, therefore, you will enjoy no visitors from the natural search engine results, which would seriously limit your earnings potential. Imagine if there were some tool or resource that would enable you to 'trick' the search engine spiders into believing that the materials you are featuring on your site are of a high quality and are exactly the type of pages that they want to see.

This would mean that the search engine spiders would index and then rate your pages, so your pages begin to feature in the natural search results. That starts to drive organic traffic to your site.

However, the 'trick' would be that, when those visitors arrive there, they are presented with nothing more than ads, and those pages are created in such a way that they do everything they can to 'draw' clicks on those adverts so that you maximize your earnings.

This would clearly mean that you are 'tricking' the search engine spiders for

your own financial gain, and that is not something that the people at Google or Yahoo! are going to be happy about. You would definitely be moving into black hat territory if this kind of thing were possible. Guess what? It is possible through a technique called cloaking, and for this reason, cloaking is possibly one of the best friend's black hat SEO practitioners could ever have.

In order to cloak your site, you need special software to do the job or you. Amongst the best programs that I know of is [Search Engine Cloaker](#), although some of the black hat site builder software that we will look at later on comes with cloaking software built in as well.

When you install cloaking software on your site, what it does is assess every visitor that comes to your site to decide whether they are a real human being or a search engine spider.

Even the stats programs that are built into your site can do this, so it is not that difficult, although the search engines are constantly changing the IP addresses that they send the spiders from, hence the 'Unknown robot' in the chart shown.

They do this because they know that many sites use cloaking software, and that the software being used relies on its ability to recognize the spiders when they arrive on a cloaked site.

When this software 'sees' that a visitor is a spider robot program, it will show that spider exactly what it wants to see. Search Engine Cloaker, for example, will create lots of pages of what appears to be high quality content (i.e. exactly what the spider wants to see) 'on the fly' and present those materials to the robot.

Thus, the search engine is 'happy' and your pages get indexed and then ranked.

When a real human visits your site, however, they will see whatever it is that you really want to show them, which in this case is page after page of nothing but adverts.

For obvious reasons, cloaking is not a practice of which the search engines approve, and as soon as you are discovered (which you probably will be sooner or later) your site will be de-indexed and removed from the results pages.

Until then, however, you are in a great position to make a lot of money from your cloaked pages!

Using cloaking is not always evil!

Although the situation is gradually changing, the search engine spiders are still primed to read text content materials on the web pages that they visit. If, therefore, you had a page that was very heavy on video, audio or graphic materials, with very little in the way of text-based content, then the spiders would probably assume that the page that you have built was low quality, even though it is anything but.

In this scenario, using cloaking would be justified from your point of view, because otherwise the pages of your site would stand little chance of being indexed as they should be if quality content is the selection criteria.

The search engines would not, however, necessarily agree because, as far as they are concerned, your original pages are junk according to their criteria. If you decide to solve this problem using cloaking, and they discover that, they are more than likely going to de-index your pages.

You, however, know that your pages are top quality and offer your visitors exactly the kind of experience that the search engines want web pages to offer - exactly what the engines are looking for.

However, you also know that using cloaking means that the search engines may well try to take your site and your business down. What you would therefore do is build your site and then create an exact replica copy of it. Instead of using the cloaking software to send your real human visitors to the original of your site, you send them to the duplicate copy, and in this way, you protect your original site.

Then, if that duplicate copy site does get de-indexed at some point, you would repeat the whole process again, so that another copy of the site is republished under a different domain name and URL.

It would also be a good idea to use a different IP address too, and if you are using shared web hosting, then you are probably going to need a different host in order to make sure that this happens.

This is a concept that we will look at in a little more detail in the next section.

The importance of incoming links

Whether you are creating white hat or black hat sites, there are certain things that you should do that will help your site gain popularity with the search engines. One of the most important of these factors is to generate as many links to the site that you are building as you can, for two reasons.

First, the search engine spiders are visiting millions of web sites every day, and, unless the sites that they land on have the 'nofollow' tag enabled in their coding, then they will follow any outgoing links from the pages that they visit. Thus, if your pages are not already indexed, then the more incoming links you have managed to generate, the greater the chances become that they will be indexed soon.

Secondly, different 'types' of links are accorded different levels of gravity by the search engine spiders, and the most valuable by far are one-way incoming links. These are links where another site links to yours, but you do not link to them, as that would be a two-way or reciprocal link.

The reason that one-way incoming links carry far more weight is because they indicate to the search engine spiders that your site has sufficient quality to justify other sites linking to it, while receiving nothing from you in return. This is true no matter what type of site you are building. One-way incoming links tell the search engine spiders that your site has intrinsic value that is recognized by others. Therefore, the more of this kind of link that you have established, the more seriously the search engine spiders will take what you are doing.

Generating one-way links of this type is therefore an essential part of making sure that, firstly, your site gets indexed as quickly as possible, and, secondly, that it climbs up the natural search results 'league table' as quickly as possible.

The people behind the search engines know that web masters understand this, and, as far as they are concerned, there are many link creation strategies that are perfectly acceptable.

There are others, however, that are very definitely not, and these indisputably fall within the realms of black hat SEO tactics.

Black hat link building

The word 'spam' is one that anyone who does any amount of work online dreads. It is, however, generally applied to the masses of incoming e-mail that such people receive every day, whereas there are other forms of 'spam' that many such people might not be quite so familiar with.

Using some of these is one way that black hat SEO exponents will utilize to generate one-way incoming links. Let us look at some of them now.

Comment spamming

Nowadays, no matter what kind of web site you are operating, you need to have a blog attached to it. Indeed, for many online marketing sites, the main 'home' page will itself be a blog, because the blog site format allows the owner to add as much fresh, unique new content to that page as they want both quickly and simply.

That content is exactly what the search engine spiders love the most, and for that reason, blogs are an essential component of any well regarded, popular web site.

Another thing that blogs bring to a site is a degree of interaction between the site owner and their visitors, as all blogs invite comments from visitors that they can add to the blog posts that they read. These have value to the site owner – they indicate that what they are writing merits comment – but they can also have value to the commenter, as they can create a link from the blog to their own site.

That is the concept of comment spam, which is where you find as many blogs as you can that carry materials that could be related to whatever type of site you are trying to promote. You then add comments to these blogs as a way of generating links back to your own site.

In fact, in what I have described so far, there is nothing at all that is black hat. Where posting blog comments becomes a black hat, technique is when you use software to post relatively useless or meaningless comments to blogs using software to do nothing more than create back links.

For example, using a program like [Blog Comments Poster](#) will let you post lots of comments to blog sites in your niche both quickly and efficiently, while [Comment Hut](#) will allow you to find those blogs that you should be posting to.

However, while posting masses of blog comments will still generate additional one-way back links for you, it is not as efficient as a link generator as it was a year or two back, for a couple of reasons.

First, the majority of blog owners moderate incoming comments before they will publish them on their site. Therefore, unless the comment that you attempt to post is relevant to the subject matter of the post to which it is attached, and unless it adds to the quality of the blog overall, it is unlikely to be approved.

Also, the owner of the blog has complete discretion over which comments they approve and those that they do not like, so even if you post high quality comments, they may not always be accepted anyway.

The second reason that posting masses of blog comments is not nearly as effective nowadays is because a large percentage of blogs that are added to individual websites use the WordPress blogging platform, and many of them have the 'nofollow' tag enabled. This stops the search engine spiders recognizing or following external links, and therefore the value of any link that is created by posting your comment is vastly reduced.

Simply put, posting spammy comments to other people's blog will get you some incoming one-way links, and they will be valuable, but it will not be so many nowadays.

Spamming the forums

No matter what your niche or market is, there are likely to be plenty of forums or notice board sites that are focused on what you are doing. If you are not aware of any such sites, take a look at [Forum Showcase](#), [Forum Virus](#) or [Big-Boards](#) to see what you can find.

Find as many forum sites as you can that are in your sphere. Make sure that you are connecting through your anonymous proxy server, and register a clutch of free e-mail accounts with services such as [gmail](#), [hotmail](#) and so on.

Use these accounts to register for all the forums that you found and do so using fictitious member names.

Many of these forums will allow you to add what is known as a signature file to any postings that you make, and that file is allowed to include a link to any site that you choose. The only thing that you will need to be careful of is not making this signature file too spammy or hyped up, nor should it be too much of a blatant advert or 'plug' for your site either.

Also, use the keyword or phrase that you are targeting as your 'anchor text' in any signature file that you create. If, for example, you are trying to bring

people to a site page where the primary keyword is 'chocolate frogs', then the signature file would have a link that said something like 'Visit the World's #1 [chocolate frogs](#) site', where the hyperlink would be from the two primary words, as shown.

Now, create a standard posting and simply add it to the forum in question, and that will create a back link for you. It does not need to be anything earth-shatteringly original or devastating – 'hi guys, I'm a newbie to this site, but I've been watching it for a while, and the content is fantastic' would be fine.

Post to as many forums as you can and that will create a link from each one. This can be a very effective tactic, because some forums sites have been around a long time, and have already acquired quite high ratings value, as measured by [Google Page Rank](#). The higher the Google PR of the sites that are sending the one-way links to your site is, the more value those links have, so linking from high PR forum pages is going to help you a great deal.

It is, of course, entirely possible to do all of this manually, and, depending on how many forums you find in your marketplace, this might be a viable option for you. If there are only a handful, for instance, then doing the job manually is not going to be too difficult.

In some markets, however, there are literally dozens of forum sites – internet marketing would be a good example of such a situation – and so manual submission is not going to represent an efficient use of your time.

There is also the fact that not all forums allow you to use a signature file, and, in those cases, that makes it a little harder to get an incoming link, as you will have to do so by adding the link into your postings. Not all sites allow that either, but there is a solution to this problem.

Get someone else to add your incoming link into their posts instead! Of course, there is software that will do this all of this for you, amongst the best of which is [Forum Equalizer](#). This program has the ability to put your forum adverts in front of over 324,000 forum site members, while creating hundreds of one-way links in a matter of moments.

The way that the software does this is very smart as well, because what it does is create an entirely bogus on-forum 'conversation'.

On the one side of this forum conversation is you and on the other side is someone who responds to your initial posting. Except that, in reality, this respondent is also you, but, because the response comes from 'someone' using a different user name and IP address, the whole thing appears genuine.

This is how it works.

You start a forum thread with an initial post that says something like 'I need some cool software that can help me to do ABC. Anyone got any recommendations?'

Your respondent (i.e. you, via the Forum Equalizer software) replies 'I use the XYZ program that you can get from xyzsoftware.com. It's extremely quick and efficient, and I use it all of the time. Highly recommended' Of course, this link is your own sales link, which is one reason this should all be done under a false name, so as to prevent anyone making a connection between the forum user name and any name that is attached to this link. You post back 'Thanks. I've checked it out and it looks to be exactly what I need', and that is essentially the job done.

Using software like Forum Equalizer is an extremely powerful tactic that has two beneficial effects.

The first effect is that it generates a one-way incoming link through the link in the respondent's post.

The second effect is that it will create sales for you as well, because all of the forum members are interested in the same subject matter as you are (they are members of a focused forum, remember). You will have presented them with a solution to a problem that many of these members will themselves have faced before, and therefore, some of them will take a look at and buy the solution that is being put forward.

Hitting trackbacks

All of the major blogging platforms have a trackback facility which is generally enabled by default. When it is enabled, it means that anytime you make a post that makes reference to a blog site operated by someone else, your blog will automatically send them a trackback 'ping' to tell them of the fact.

The beauty of trackbacks is that very few people are really aware of how they work, and very few people bother to moderate the trackbacks that they receive (or send) in the way that they do with incoming blog comments for example.

There is therefore far more chance of a spammy attempt to create a link using trackbacks being successful than there will ever be using blog comments.

The problem, however, is that links created by trackbacks are two-way

reciprocal links, and we established that such links did not carry the authority of one-way incoming links. What you therefore need to do is 'finesse' the trackback system so that the links created are one-way only, and that is in your direction.

In order to do this, there is software available, but the only program that I know of that automates the task is [Trackback Spider](#), and the site is usually closed. Alternatively, you can create a manual trackback using the form posted on the [Wiz Bang Blog](#) site, although doing so is obviously a much slower process.

The first thing that you need to do before you can begin creating trackbacks is to locate the blog sites in your niche or market to where your trackbacks can be sent. You can do this by searching through [Google Blog Search](#), or by looking at any of the major blog directory sites that can be found [here](#).

Blog sites with the trackbacks resource enabled can also be found by running a search from the Google search engine by typing in the term "trackback address for this post", as that will pull up a list of relevant blog sites.

That is a good number of blogs that you can start trackbacking, and that should generate a nice new tranche of one-way incoming links. Remember, however, to use your proxy server when making your postings, and change the server that you are using frequently, so that every trackback that you send to each blog (you can send as many as you want) does not come from the same IP address.

Also, try to use a little imagination and change the trackback information that you use to post to blog, so that the owners do not start to recognize a pattern and block your trackbacks. The sooner you give away that you are spamming them, the quicker a blog owner is likely to nuke your trackback, so try to keep it going as long as you can by being imaginative.

Guestbook comments

Thousands of website owners have 'guest books' on their site in which they invite you to leave comments. Keep the site owners happy by doing so and you create an incoming link every time.

As long as you avoid adding your own links to guest books that are already filled with poor quality, spammy links and make sure that the link you add is reasonably well thought out, then this will create some nice links from sites that, because they are often older, have quite reasonable Page Rank.

Building a blog farm

Another black hat method of generating incoming one-way links for your site is by constructing a 'blog farm', which is essentially an interlinked network of blogs. Here is how you do it.

The first step is to open several accounts with hosted blogging platform sites like Blogger.com, Wordpress.com or LiveJournal.

Using any of these sites means that the blogs that you are going to build in order to 'farm them' for links are not hosted on your web hosting account, so that reduces your risk. Also, as a site like Blogger is actually owned and hosted by Google themselves, any blogs that you build there are going to be indexed very quickly.

Each of these different accounts should be opened from a different IP address (through your proxy server) and a different e-mail address as well, so go back to the list of free e-mail accounts you set up earlier and use those to create your accounts.

Next, set up two or three blogs attached to each of the accounts that you just created. Use a different template for each, and make sure that each is focused on a particular keyword that you are focusing your promotional efforts on. Use that keyword in the blog Title and (if possible) in the blog address or URL as well.

So, for example, if you are using Blogger, and the keyword that you were targeting was 'chocolate frogs', the input screen would look like this.

Once each blog is successfully created, then you need to write your first short posting for each one. Include the primary keyword in each of these posts at least two or three times so that the search engine spiders will know exactly what the page is about.

Then you link them all together, but in such a way that they are all sending out and receiving one link each. So, if you had blogs A-F (and, of course, the

more blogs you have, the more links you will be able to generate), the linking pattern would look something like this:

A --> B --> C --> D --> E --> F --> A

In order to hide the interlinked nature of all of these farm blogs, the best thing to do with these blogs is to have them hosted on different blog platforms, as well as attaching them to different accounts. For instance, you might have two blogs hosted by Blogger, 2 at Wordpress.com and the final two at LiveJournal. This ensures that if any of your accounts gets closed down, it does not take forever to get your linked network back up and running again.

All of these blog pages point back to the main pages of your site, either to the cloaked pages that you were creating earlier or directly to pages that are optimized for the same keyword that is featured on your blog page.

After all the blogs have at least the first post added to them, you need to tell the search engines spiders that they exist by pinging the blog URL and RSS feed to all of the major blog directories. You can do this by using the services of both [Pingoat](#) and [Feedshark](#), as these two sites between them seem to cover almost all of the major directories.

There is a little duplication from one service to the other, but don't be overly concerned about that fact.

Once you have done the first 'post and ping', the next thing to do is repeat the process again and again. This is absolutely essential to keep the search engine spiders returning on a regular basis, and that is the key to making sure that your blog farm works efficiently.

Doing this manually is possible, but it is also likely to become tedious as well, and, depending on the size of the 'farm' that you build, it could take up a good deal of time too.

However, building large blog farms is a very effective method of creating lots of incoming one-way links. Also, as long as you can add regular content to those blogs, then the quality of those links will improve over time as well as your individual blog pages gain Google Page Rank as they become more popular.

The other important factor about blog farms is that you can use them time and again to promote any (and all) of your future projects as well, simply by adding links from the various different blogs to any pages that you are promoting.

In effect, therefore, good quality blog farms will become an increasingly valuable asset to any business that you decide to promote online, so they should be nurtured.

For all of these reasons, you may want to consider automating the whole blog content posting process using a software program like [Blogger Generator](#) to do the necessary for you.

The question is why creating such a blog farm is generally considered to be a black hat linking strategy. After all, the only thing you are doing is creating perfectly good blogs and linking them together. It is hardly unethical to do that, and definitely not illegal, is it?

This is a perfect illustration of the idea that what is black hat and what is not depending entirely on the opinions of the people who run the search engines, without there having to be any suggestion of impropriety or lack of ethics.

The point as far as the search engines are concerned is that using blog farms in this way somehow 'skews' the true popularity of the site pages that you are sending links to, and that you are artificially inflating the perceived value of your site.

Maybe you are, but isn't that what anyone who is marketing online is always doing anyway? I would say so, but that is only my opinion, and clearly, the folks behind the search engines do not agree with me!

As with all tactics that are deemed (by the search engines) to be black hat, you are the only person who can decide whether you feel comfortable using the idea of link generation using blog farms.

A quick look at white hat linking

In addition to the black hat linking strategies we looked at earlier, there are many ways that you can generate incoming links using totally white hat tactics. Here are a few of the better known ones.

- **Article writing and submission:** Create articles that are 400-600 words long that feature your primary keywords and phrases, and submit them for publication by the major article directory sites like ezinearticles, goarticles and articledashboard. The advantage of doing this is that, first, it creates an incoming link from the directory site itself, and, as these pages often have high Google PR, these links are valuable. Second, other web masters can read your articles, download those that they like and publish them on their own sites. That adds additional one-way incoming links as well.
- **Submit to site directories:** Submit your site or blog details to the major online directory programs. You can find a list of both the sites that encourage you to submit for free and those that charge for submission here. Any directory that adds your details adds another one-way links and, again, as these sites tend to be very well established, the value of the incoming links tends to be quite good as well.
- **Social bookmarking sites:** Submitting your stories or articles to the top social bookmarking sites like Digg, SlashDot, StumbleUpon or Del.icio.us can have two major benefits for your site. The first is that, if you submit something that becomes popular enough to feature on the home page of the site in question, you will see thousands and thousands of unique visitors to your site within 24-48 hours. Secondly, even if you don't manage to hit 'pay-dirt' in this way, you will still get incoming links from these sites and, as all are Google PR 7,8 and 9 ranked pages, those links are extremely valuable as well, and, of course, they are all free too.

Site creator software

One way that black hat marketers make their money is by creating long lists of keywords, and then building huge web sites with hundreds or even thousands of pages, each of which is optimized for one specific keyword phrase. Each of these pages is then monetized, generally using Pay-Per-Click advertising programs,

Obviously, building such sites manually would take forever, so if this is a money making option that you would like to consider, here are some software programs that you can use to do the site creation job for you: [RSSGM](#): This program will build sites that feature thousands of pages at the touch of a few buttons, and is entirely free. Note however that it has been around for some time now, and is not the most efficient program around, but it is nevertheless very good and it is free.

[YACG](#): This is another free program that is considerably easier to use than RSSGM, and has another significant advantage too. All site content generator programs have things in the program that leave a 'footprint' that identifies that site as one that was built with that particular program.

The search engine spiders will recognize this footprint and assume that the site is a 'junky' one so that it does not get indexed. These footprints must therefore be removed before you publish the site, and that is a considerably easier task using YACG than it is with RSSGM.

[Blog Solution](#): This is not a free program but is perhaps the most complete solution of all the site creators featured here. For example, the cloaking feature that we looked at earlier is an integral part of the program, as is the facility to download and use any of the thousands of free WordPress templates that you can find as the basis of the site that you create.

This immediately removes one of the most immediately recognizable footprints that many automatically created sites exhibit, which is the template that the site is built on. If you are serious about creating lots of massive sites in a matter of moments that will bring you the maximum returns, then this is a program that you must look at.

Conclusion

The single most important thing to appreciate about black hat SEO and promotional tactics and techniques is that there is absolutely nothing intrinsically wrong with any of them by definition, unless the definition that you are applying is the same one that the search engines use.

Sure, were you to really start pushing the black hat envelope, then some of the practices can become very questionable, and in some cases very close to being illegal, but nothing that you have read of in this book is in any way like that.

The only reason that the SEO tactics that you have read about here are included in this black hat manual at all is that the search engines don't like them, and, if they catch you using such tactics, then the chances are that they might take some action against you. For example, if Google discover that you are using your Blogger account to create blog farms, they will in all probability close that account down.

Having said that, Google have been known to close down Blogger accounts without any justification at all before now (it has happened to two perfectly white hat accounts of my own in the past) so using Blogger means that your account can always be closed down, irrespective of whether you have done anything wrong or not.

So, just make sure that you only have two or three blogs attached to each account that you open and keep copies of all of your postings, so that you can create another in double quick time should you ever need to do so.

The bottom line is that black hat means nothing more than the search engines don't like what you are doing and, for me at least, what the people behind Google or Yahoo like or dislike is no great concern of mine. My concern is making money from my online business.

I also know that the primary concern of the people behind the search engines is doing exactly the same for theirs, no matter what they come out with about their concern being the quality of the sites featured in their search engine results.

For that reason alone, I have no hesitation about using SEO tactics and I would recommend that you adopt the same attitude, starting right now.