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# Matt Cutts: Gadgets, Google, and SEO

## The decay and fall of guest blogging for SEO

Posted January 20, 2014 in [Google/SEO](#)

Okay, I'm calling it: if you're using guest blogging as a way to gain links in 2014, you should probably stop. Why? Because over time it's become a more and more spammy practice, and if you're doing a lot of guest blogging then you're hanging out with really bad company.

Back in the day, guest blogging used to be a respectable thing, much like getting a coveted, respected author to write the introduction of your book. It's not that way any more. Here's an example unsolicited, spam email that I recently received:

My name is XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX and I work as a content marketer for a high end digital marketing agency in [a city halfway around the world]. I have been promoting high quality content in select niches for our clients.

We are always on the lookout for professional, high class sites to further promote our clients and when I came across your blog I was very impressed with the fan following that you have established. I [sic] would love to speak to you regarding the possibility of posting some guest articles on your blog. Should you be open to the idea, **we can consider making suitable contribution**, befitting to high standard of services that your blog offers to larger audience.

On my part, I assure you a high quality article that is-

- 100% original
- Well written
- Relevant to your audience and
- Exclusive to you

We can also explore including internal links to related articles across your site to help keep your readers engaged with other content on your blog.

All I ask in return is a **dofollow link or two in the article body** that will be relevant to your audience and the article. We understand that you will want to approve the article, and I can assure you that we work with a team of highly talented writers, so we can guarantee that the article would be insightful and professionally written. We aim to write content that will benefit your loyal readers. We are also happy to write on any topic, you suggest for us.

If you ignore the bad spacing and read the parts that I bolded, someone sent me a spam email offering money to get links that pass PageRank. That's a clear violation of Google's [quality guidelines](#). Moreover, we've been seeing more and more reports of "guest blogging" that are really "paying for PageRank" or worse, "we'll insert some spammy links on your blog without you realizing it."

Ultimately, this is why we can't have nice things in the SEO space: a trend starts out as authentic. Then more and more people pile on until only the barest trace of legitimate behavior remains. We've reached the point in the downward spiral where people are hawking "guest post outsourcing" and writing articles about "how to automate guest blogging."

So stick a fork in it: guest blogging is done; it's just gotten too spammy. In general I wouldn't recommend accepting a guest blog post unless you are willing to vouch for someone personally or know them well. Likewise, I wouldn't recommend relying on guest posting, guest blogging sites, or guest blogging SEO as a linkbuilding strategy.

For historical reference, I'll list a few videos and links to trace the decline of guest articles. Even back in 2012, I tried to draw a distinction between high-quality guest posts vs. spammier guest blogs:

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## What is Google's view on guest blogging for links?



Unfortunately, a lot of people didn't seem to hear me say to steer away from low-quality guest blog posting, so I did a follow-up video to warn folks away from spammy guest articles:

## Does Google take action on spammy guest blogging activities?



In mid-2013, [John Mueller](#) gave spot on advice about [nofollowing links in guest blog posts](#). I think by mid-2013, a ton of people saw the clear trend towards guest blogging being overused by a bunch of low-quality, spammy sites.

Then a few months ago, I took a question about how to be a guest blogger without it looking like paying for links (even the question is a clue that guest blog posting has been getting spammier and spammier). I tried to find a sliver of daylight to talk about high-quality guest blog posts, but if you read the transcript you'll notice that I ended up spending most of the time talking about low-quality/spam guest posting and guest articles.

### How can I guest blog without it appearing as if I paid for links?



And then in this video that we posted last month, even the question itself predicted that Google would take stronger action and asked about “guest blogging as spam”:

### What should I be aware of if I'm considering guest blogging?



So there you have it: the decay of a once-authentic way to reach people. Given how spammy it's become, I'd expect Google's webspam team to take a pretty dim view of guest blogging going forward.

**Added:** It seems like most people are getting the spirit of what I was trying to say, but I'll add a bit more context. I'm not trying to throw the baby out with the bath water. There are still many good reasons to do some guest blogging (exposure, branding, increased reach, community, etc.). Those reasons existed way before Google and they'll continue into the future. And there are absolutely some fantastic, high-quality guest bloggers out there. I changed the title of this post to make it more clear that I'm talking about guest blogging for search engine optimization (SEO) purposes.

I'm also not talking about multi-author blogs. High-quality multi-author blogs like Boing Boing have been around since the beginning of the web, and they can be compelling, wonderful, and useful.

I just want to highlight that a bunch of low-quality or spam sites have latched on to “guest blogging” as their link-building strategy, and we see a lot more spammy attempts to do guest blogging. Because of that, I'd recommend skepticism (or at least caution) when someone reaches out and offers you a guest blog article.

657 Responses to *The decay and fall of guest blogging for SEO* ([Leave a comment](#))



Conrad O'Connell

January 20, 2014 at 1:01 pm

I think this paints too broad of a stroke.

Sure, you shouldn't be accepting random posts from people only looking for followed links: but that was never a legit tactic.

Perhaps the act of guest blogging doesn't need to go away: only the phrasing. For example, maybe we should think of guest blogging as a method for ONLY public relations, not for links.



**Matt Cutts**

January 20, 2014 at 3:34 pm

Conrad, thanks for the feedback. I wanted to give people a heads up mainly because the practice has gotten so spammy. There are certainly reasonable and valid reasons to consider guest posts, but regular site owners should be aware of the risks as well. I was talking to a small business owner recently and she was delighted that someone wanted to write a guest blog post. She thought that her small blog was being validated, when in fact it was being targeted.

Several years ago, I would have said that the default answer when someone proposed doing a guest blog post would "yes." However, with the rapid rise of low-quality or spammy sites trying to build tons of links via guest blogging, so I'd say that the default answer now should be "no." Of course, if you know the person writing the blog post well, or want to vouch for them, or if the author is happy to nofollow their links, then that changes the calculation—it's much more likely that someone is looking for a new audience instead of a way to get keyword-rich links.



**Michael Aulia**

January 20, 2014 at 4:27 pm

I opened up my blog for guest blogging months ago, as I was excited to have people helping out and writing good news articles. I wasn't aware what I did back then...

After about 5-10 articles, I started to realise that this is just spam and spam. By then, it was sort of too late and I found my site has been linked in lots of sites as a "site that accepts guest postings" a.k.a spammable site

Sad, really. And I thought I could take a break every now and then and let my "readers" write 1 or 2 articles



**Matt Cutts**

January 20, 2014 at 4:47 pm

I hear you, Michael. I think a lot of small business owners are in that position. At first, they're thrilled that someone would want to contribute an article. Not everyone realizes that if someone contacts you out of the blue offering an article, it's good to be skeptical.



**Tracy Vides**

January 20, 2014 at 10:27 pm

I know exactly what Michael is saying. I'm one of the lucky few who've "guest posted" on his site Craving Tech – we had this conversation when I approached him. I was happy to get nofollow links in my post as it had no purpose other than to point readers

to a couple of good resources; hell, I don't even have a site of my own.

Matt, If what I assume is correct, guest posting is SEO's last bastion of getting legitimate links with good content. If Google (Mueller and you) is asking guest post hosts to nofollow their links, why not simply devalue links on blog sites to save everyone the trouble? You might even succeed in improving the quality of posts (and reduce fluff) on bigwigs such as HuffPo, TechCrunch and Mashable with that! Right?

**Carlo Adrian Canon**

February 2, 2014 at 7:15 pm

I also have one site where I opened for guest blogging and I got people who contacted me. Some were SEO services providers who wanted to post to my site for their customers which for sure were just spams. Guest Blogging is good for creating connections but it should not be abused for profit gain and spam.

**Dhaval**

January 21, 2014 at 1:52 am

So matt, on the basis of your reply to Conrad, are you saying that guest blogging with nofollow link is still in a place?

**Matt Cutts**

January 21, 2014 at 12:01 pm

If the links are nofollowed, then they don't affect PageRank, so it would be outside the scope of my team at that point. A high-quality guest post with nofollowed links can still be a good way to get exposure to a new audience, branding, etc.

**Johan**

January 25, 2014 at 7:20 am

But, where does this end? Take me – I have a very niche interest, but I'm really really good at it. Various huge commercial sites in that niche have asked me if I want to write articles. Which I'd love to, but if I can't get a little benefit to my site out of it then I have to ask myself is it worth my while?

Yes I appreciate that I would still get visitors with a nofollow link, but consider this – this sounds like a hugely relevant large and popular site in my niche shouldn't link directly to my tiny wannabe little site "because Google says guest material should be nofollowed" – even though there is huge relevancy here? I like to write, to help people, to teach, but this is a disincentive.

I hope I understand this initiative correctly that it's aimed against the abusers rather than cases such as this, but still, what sort of web are we heading towards =(.

**Aaron Jones**

January 21, 2014 at 4:17 am

Just lastnight I'd been contacted by several individuals wanting to write a guest post on my blog for link exchange. I've never had anyone wanting to do this before. I did a Google search of the individuals name (which was

fake by the way) and he came up on a website promoting guest blog tactics out of India with a fake Gravatar. Amazing! Needless to say I've always been careful to whom I share my links with from my blog. I'm assuming they start hitting you up for guest blog post when your blog starts to gain a little popularity. At least this is the way it's been happening to me.

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**Sawaram Suthar**

January 21, 2014 at 11:28 am

Yup Aaron, you're true! there are many people who just want to do this practice without knowing fact and your or targeted reader. I think doing one or two guest blog in a month from valid account is not bad but if you trying for more with fake account then it Google can consider it spam.

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**Rod Olivares**

January 22, 2014 at 4:37 pm

Amen to that Aaron! I was also contacted by several people in the past few weeks asking about guest posts. The first thing I would ask is for them to send me their website address (so I could analyze it). I would also ask them several questions that would force them to write answers to; by doing that, I was able (by carefully paying attention to their grammar) to tell they were on the other side of the world and working for SEO companies that are still in the 2007 mindset spamming as much as they can!

So annoying. Anyways, once more, everything falls back on "quality" writing and well thought-out content that is actually helpful to your audience. Glad that's still the case.

~Rod

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**Donovan**

January 27, 2014 at 11:33 am

Aaron that's all I see these days is spammers from India and Pakistan.

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**Chris**

January 31, 2014 at 6:49 am

It does happen. And it has got a bit out of hand, although I personally have started to receive less emails about people wanting to post them which is good news.

What I have now done is created a strict rules page for experts who want to contribute. I only want experts in the technology market so it is annoying when I have all sorts of random people messaging me.

Hopefully with clear rules in place it will stop that. I think as webmasters we should all do this, have clear guidelines and then when someone isn't up to scratch you can point them to that page. I recommend you do that mate, will save you a lot of time!

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**Bob**

May 23, 2014 at 7:23 am

Yea Aaron, same here. I have gotten so many of these requests it is ridiculous. It is a bummer that just like almost every other great thing on the internet, it gets ruined by spammers...

**Andrew Crook**

January 21, 2014 at 5:11 am

I understand the concern regarding spam, however, we see this with everything on the new these days.

Instead, please could we please have some guidelines for sites who accept guest posts rather than giving the impression that Google is saying sites shouldn't accept them at all!

Being able to write good quality content and having it published on a quality site should remain a privilege. I am all for spreading myself around web, helping other site owners and their readers .... so should Google.

**Eric G.**

January 21, 2014 at 5:19 pm

My guess is that if you write or accept a guest post for the REAL reason they exist in the first place – delivering value and quality content to an audience – you will be fine.

Even though Matt's comments seem to cast a wide net, I think that's only because spam is so prevalent. If you genuinely focus on quality and basically ignore SEO (i.e. don't jam-pack heavily customized anchor text), you will be fine.

**Charlie**

January 23, 2014 at 11:27 am

If what you are doing feels wrong...then it's probably a bad thing. I personally only write for industry and community sites. But I do it without the intention of building links and more because it's my life and I like being active in the community.

I'm stoked to see this happen because the best relationships are built over years offline. I think that same approach is being applied to the internet.

**Sowrav Datta**

January 23, 2014 at 6:22 pm

Matt, You right, Lots of small business company doing those think as well. Now people doing one think for guest posting (Well give me \$50 or give me \$100 for one approved do-follow article and backlink ). This is really bad SEO strategy. Its also not natural view of search engine optimization. Matts you already cleared guest blogging point which is bad and which is good. So, This is clear signal for every webmaster

**Byron Hardie**

January 24, 2014 at 9:59 am

I think this is a very clear distinction to be made. I agree with Conrad that low-quality guest posting for the intent of link building has always been frowned upon. But this wouldn't be unlike abusing directory listings, press releases, widgets, or other business relationships (all of which also have legitimate counterparts to their spammy siblings).

There has been a very clear split between "classical" SEO and modern

search era digital marketing. The former was largely based on trying to inflate search signals to convince Google that a site had more value / authority / trust than it actually possessed. In the last couple years it seems that your technology at Google has made major strides to catch up with the company's vision.

Even putting the ethical argument aside, those that want to take shortcuts rather than creating real brand authority and user value will now have to weigh the risks because the strategy of SEO manipulation is often cost prohibitive.

With that said, painting with very broad strokes could also be taken the wrong way. Many legitimate sites offer quality guest posting by industry professionals. Some have rigid editorial standards and review processes. Even sites like SearchEngineLand, SearchEngineJournal, Moz, CopyPress, and Business2Community all accept guest posting.

The challenge has always been how to algorithmically determine intent. Certainly, the nofollow attribute can take away the carrot of solely writing for link value. But even this can punish legitimate content creators when the entire idea behind PageRank was to identify relevancy and importance of sites based on others that link to them. Getting a link in an author profile or byline in a guest post on a trusted site shouldn't necessarily be penalized. But how do you quantify Trust in Google's eyes? There isn't always a Red Light / Green Light that Google offers to webmasters when they are considering ways to market their business online.

A fear has taken hold in the SEO community in recent years due to the Google crackdown on low-quality sites and link spam. Business owners often aren't educated enough to know the risks. Unscrupulous SEO service providers either deliberately prey on these clients or are just uneducated themselves on the potential dangers. And those that are aware and do understand are so gun shy and paranoid from possibly getting on Google's bad side (since there is often a lot of ambiguity, nuance, and exceptions to every rule) that it can cause paralysis in marketing strategies which can also hurt a company.

I don't envy your position Matt. There is no question that the dirty bathwater needs to be disposed of but we have to be careful not to throw the baby out with it or traumatize the baby never to want to take baths again.



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**Astrid van der Vleut**

January 24, 2014 at 4:06 pm

Those guest blogging services are so enticing for small business owners because they offer (or promise) free, high quality content. It's hard to convince a budget and time restrained website owner to refuse something they don't see any harm in and saves them a lot of money. So, thanks for the post and pointing it out so clearly Matt.



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**Nirjhar Lo**

February 4, 2014 at 1:41 pm

"Dofollow backlinks"

"Hi this is xxxxx of ... As an admin i want to exchange a dofollow backlink. I will add dofollow backlink to your website and you have to add an dofollow backlink of my website in your website.....and i will guest post in your blog also...."

I got this few days after opening my site. Won't it be great if blogs get replaced by social media eventually? Be it facebook or g+ or both of them. Blog is nothing but a social media with great vulnarability. "Blogging for

seo" approach has taken us down to an unfair internet. So, I welcome google's decession.

Social media should be used for sharing and expressing. What do you think?



**Jared**

January 20, 2014 at 5:14 pm

Definitely too broad. Authorship certainly helped encourage the practice of guest posting, so why should we be penalized? To me, this is just opening the door to more spammy solicitations of journalists and under the table deals.



**Jay Soriano**

January 20, 2014 at 7:47 pm

I agree, why not place a bigger emphasis on authorship and creating good content? That seems like a much more rational decision than targeting guest blogging as a whole.



**Michael Haley**

January 21, 2014 at 6:01 am

Jared, it does seem a little broad... but then again, if you think about it, it seems more like it depends on the intent of the guest post. That is, are you guest blogging to get a link? Is the site that you are guest posting one that has guest bloggers that write to get links? Or, are you guest blogging because you are an authority on the topic and are filling a void on the authority site? Did you contact them or did they ask you to write an article for their site? Is there a monetary exchange or barter involved? I'm not Matt Cutts... but it seems that all of the anti-spam we are taught comes down to the same thing:  
Are we adding value to the internet?  
If search engines didn't exist, would you take the time to write the article?  
Are you writing for people or search engines?



**myrujukan**

March 21, 2014 at 6:29 pm

I agree with you Michael Haley. Too much guest posting bring the concept to spam search engine with the bundle of articles. That is not natural to do quality articles right. Do we blog for search engine or for reader



**steve plunkett**

April 2, 2014 at 1:13 pm

see above.. Why is this hard is this to understand?

Is it Uniquely Relevant content? (and all that implies)

#SMH



**Crafty Sharon**

April 24, 2014 at 8:36 am

I'm very confused. I want to grow my small blog, but what is left to do? Ezine is spam, social media is dead, talking to other

bloggers is dead. What's left?  
I'm not an 'authority', but I do bring value if I write a guest post..otherwise it wouldn't get published, right?



### Christina

April 4, 2014 at 11:21 am

I appreciate the comments from Matt, but I think that his video comments on other techniques especially (specifically article marketing), the line needs to be drawn more clearly between what is okay and what isn't...as opposed to just a no.

To the poster above:

Spammy solicitations and spammy accepting are two different things. This is like eliminating whole categories of food because one variety makes you sick. You have to do something credible (if it works and you're doing it the right way, why should you eliminate it? at some point, there will be no options left)

As a blog owner, taking on guest posts would personally be a bit much for me, but that doesn't mean others don't have the time to vet the links in what they've posted and limit content in general so they can do this (have a regular schedule to vet their own blog content, even old posts)...There's usually a way to do something the right way.

Credible:

1. Pick a credible post to link on your blog.
2. Write a unique credible article to promote your website (yes, even on 1 or two "credible" article directories...although, I appreciate his response..the video from Matt on this subject was such a broad stroke).
3. Use keywords which match what you're talking about in the content.
4. Make sure that whoever you link to does the same.

Some of the broad strokes being drawn, just assuming all people who use the technique are doing it the wrong way, are actually hurtful to people trying to provide legitimate content and trying to promote legitimate sources of information on the net for themselves and for others.

This video did a better job of identifying a legitimate path than the other one I mentioned, but I hope that since the motives appear sincere, some more information/investigation will be done into how to succeed with certain techniques before they are denounced as not useful by Google's expert/spokesman.



### Jared Carrizales

January 20, 2014 at 5:16 pm

Much too broad. Authorship certainly helped encourage the practice of guest posting, so why should we be penalized? To me, this is just opening the door to more spammy solicitations of journalists.



### Anz Joy

February 15, 2014 at 10:59 am

I can't still believe I'm seeing this. Guest blogging has been a widely adopted strategy to build reputation for years. What about the authors who have spent hours on writing quality articles sacrificing sleep?

You cannot kill guest blogging ,atleast you should not. Sort out the bad and destroy the bad.

You don't burn a house to catch a mouse..!!

**Wes**

January 20, 2014 at 1:02 pm

Commence the publishing of "SEO" articles and blog-post-spam talking about Matt's anti-spam blog post in 3, 2, 1...

**Aleksejs Ivanovs**

January 20, 2014 at 1:03 pm

Matt,

I'm glad you're finally addressing the issue in serious manner. I just hope that the word will spread and the words will be heard. There are plenty of other opportunities for building links (like, building relationships), and for the past couple of months we're hearing only negativity about guest blogging.

It's like you said, every time a new question about guest blogging comes up – the response is always getting worse.

Thank you,  
Alex

**Jordan Dove**

January 20, 2014 at 1:05 pm

Matt,

Thanks for sharing this information. I will steer clear of contributing to guest blogs and focus on creating my own quality content with my business partner.

Additionally, I'd like to ~~ask~~ know if including microdata (RichSnippets) in each article with utilizing all Social Signals (FB, Tw, G+) and using Feedburner and other Google related products will be the most feasible way for "organically" ranking? Can you elaborate shortly?

Thanks,

JD

**Patrick**

January 20, 2014 at 1:05 pm

Can't say that I'm surprised Matt, most of what most people call "guest blogging" is just posting content with links.

"Ultimately, this is why we can't have nice things..."

LMAO'd.

**Kev**

January 20, 2014 at 1:05 pm

Hi Matt

I can understand entirely why guest blogging has evolved into a sordid spammy industry and why you must take action. If it reduces spam, then well done.

But what about good quality sites that use expert contributors for their unique and valuable content? Does google really intend to change the shape of the web?

Will quality blogs be able to request exemption from their contributors being penalised?

**Daniel**

January 20, 2014 at 3:16 pm

This is a good question that I would like a solid answer to if possible Matt. Thanks in advance!



**Caitlin**

January 21, 2014 at 3:40 am

If the content and the links are for humans rather than search engines, then the links can be nofollow.



**Marko Saric**

January 20, 2014 at 1:10 pm

Very much agree with you Matt! It all started with real bloggers writing great quality posts in order to connect to an audience of a larger site, but has turned into something that is done by outsourced writers that spam any site they can get access to with the only objective of putting some dubious links within the copy.



**Morgan**

January 21, 2014 at 11:52 am

I fully agree Marko,

As with all good things, they come to an end as people tend to abuse them.

Morgan



**Gerald Weber**

January 22, 2014 at 9:57 am

I agree with you on one hand but share the sentiments of several others here.

I get spammy guest blog requests all the time. I'm mean constantly. It is a slight annoyance but I just sent them to spam. Similarly I get blog comment spam all the time. Their spam gets filtered etc. Not approved. But that doesn't mean every blog comment is spam, just because I get a ton of spam comments that never see the light of day.

So in other words I just ignore the spam guest posts requests, just as I ignore the spam comment requests.

So yes there are many people that are being spammy guest blogging. No doubt about it. And no doubt it can be annoying. But I'm smart enough to know when someone is just wanting a quick link from me and I just say no when that is the case.

Just because there are a lot of spammers and individuals just looking for links, that should not invalidate all guest blogging as a whole practice. This is far too broad a stroke as some one in the comment above said.

You should not lump all guest blogging into the spam category just because spammers exist.

Also just because you got an email offering money for a guest post does not mean all guest posts are paid links.



**Jeremy Rivera**

January 20, 2014 at 1:10 pm

It's a shame to see that trend of quality tactics getting hijacked. The thing for me is "I

wouldn't recommend accepting a guest blog post unless you are willing to vouch for someone personally" this should have ALWAYS been the standard by which you judge the content you're receiving on your site.

**Ben Griffiths**

January 20, 2014 at 1:11 pm

So do you just chuck their whole client list into the WebSpam review queue? 😊

**David Iwanow**

January 20, 2014 at 1:11 pm

hmmm... well some folks in the industry has felt that this was coming and have been screaming the end is near for about 2 years but I still believe that a great guest post with nofollow links in a relevant vertical can still do you a world of good and drive quality referral traffic.

If it's a real site you have the benefits of reaching their existing audience with your brand/product and if it's a good post that will expose you to their audience when they share your article via their social channels.

Sure some of the dumber \$5 for a guest post might lose some customers but I expect many people won't change their tactics same as the blog spammers that still keep hammering peoples sites to build link wheels.

If marketers are still selling PageRank improvement services I do think it will take a few more years before even the lowest quality article services stop attracting new clients on a daily basis. There are so many sites in some verticals just held up by \$10-25 guest posts that they will just disavow the links in GWT or blame their agency for building and move on to something else without thinking twice about it.

I'm sure this will be front page news on every marketing blog within the next day and this might be one of your most retweeted, referenced and commented posts so far?

Since so much of what Google has done is making the average site owners lives harder to compete, is there a chance that more internal resources might be allocated to further improve GWT functionality and transparency during 2014?

**Matt Cutts**

January 20, 2014 at 3:27 pm

David, if the links in a guest post are nofollowed then it doesn't affect PageRank, so that would be within our guidelines. I agree that some guest blog posts can be a good way to get exposure to a new audience. I just wanted to highlight that guest blogging as a whole has gotten pretty spammy at this point.

**Sergey Marchuk**

January 20, 2014 at 4:15 pm

I haven't bothered much with guest posts since I've always seen it as a spammy way to get backlinks, but I have been asked a few times to write informational posts about two topics that I'm well versed in.

My question is about *that*:

When writing my guest posts, would I rel="nofollow" the links *within the article itself* that are covering points (i.e. links to wikipedia and other resources that help support the article)? Also, what are the steps for establishing authorship tags on the articles that I've written?

The reason that I ask is because *it's nice getting credit for stuff you write, but what about adding to your **authorship** profile?*

**Tea Silvestre**

January 20, 2014 at 4:28 pm

What about the blog owners who don't know how to create nofollow links? I think there's a ton of folks out there with good intentions who may not be aware about all of this. Does a link in a bio count as spammy? And do we need to go back and ask all the blog owners we've ever guest posted on to change our links? How does Google know that we're a quality guest poster? You say, "if you know someone well enough to vouch for them..." How does one vouch for that someone with Google? Is there a checkbox somewhere??

**Robert Wall**

January 20, 2014 at 8:52 pm

Tea, there's no way to vouch for them with Google.

What Matt is saying is that if you accept guest posts from people that you know, like, and trust, you're most likely not going to wind up with a bunch of spammy links on your blog.

If you reply to an email from a random person on the Internet offering to write you a "high quality guest post" in return for "two backlinks", you're going to get a spammy post.

The spammy stuff is what Matt is targeting.

**Danmyson**

January 21, 2014 at 9:09 am

So.....spam, crappy content is ok as long as it is no followed?????????  
Come on here Matt, let's get real. People sharing content is what makes the web work. That was actually its point from creation. People spamming crappy blogs for a guest post is obviously something that is "poor behaviour". Guess where this happens? On poor crappy sites that add no value anyway. Why create a problem when there isn't one? Should Huff Post linking to an infographic on my site carry no value because some "clever dick" has an seo policy of placing 10\$ content on as many sites as possible? What value will be derived from these crappy blogs anyway? It is like the whole penalising thing. Why penalise when zero value is a pretty good penalty of its own? Talk about tying yourself up in knots. You want to stop spam links? Really? Remove value from sites that have no readership or social scene! Bingo. Job done. Any site that is genuine is only ever going to want high quality, useful content from the start. Shan't hold my breath here.....Any chance of me posting here by the way? All I want in return is.....

**Bruce Chant**

January 20, 2014 at 5:52 pm

Well said David.

I second this request - "Since so much of what Google has done is making the average site owners lives harder to compete, is there a chance that more internal resources might be allocated to further improve GWT functionality and transparency during 2014?"

It certainly would "balance the ledger" and enable site owners to more readily work

within Google's increasingly narrow guidelines.

**Peter Interland**

January 21, 2014 at 4:14 am

"...is there a chance that more internal resources might be allocated to further improve GWT functionality and transparency during 2014?"

Couldn't agree more. Let's work together – together being the operative word – to improve the user experience. If GWT can be more specific about the links it considers to be spammy or suspicious to our sites, we can better target our resources and time in removing them, disavowing them, or nofollowing them.

Sometimes bad links DO happen to good sites.

**Matt Sells**

January 20, 2014 at 1:11 pm

Wow. That's all I can say. There are some HIGHLY respected guest bloggers out there writing for some great blogs. Why throw the baby out with the bathwater?

*"Ultimately, this is why we can't have nice things in the SEO space: a trend starts out as authentic. Then more and more people pile on until only the barest trace of legitimate behavior remains."*

This is not just in the SEO space but ALL markets. Take car sales for an example. There are some great companies that offer great and legit cars. Then, there are some that are not legit and will sell you a car that will die after driving it off the lot. I could give hundreds of other examples in many different markets. Should we punish all companies selling cars? Would not make sense.

Maybe Google needs to up their game and ability to decipher what is quality or not. Everyone should not be punished for the wrongdoings of some.

You guys staff some of the brightest minds on the planet. I am sure you could figure something out. Right? Or is the plan to just move everything to **pay per play** like Clear Channel radio did for recording artists?

**Kalee**

January 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm

I agree, it really does come across as we're getting pushed more and more into their advertising platform.

To be fair though, I don't think the issue is that Google is unable to determine quality, I think the problem is that if they penalized all sites with low quality links, the search results would no longer be relevant because of the prevalence of spammy links.

**Durant Imboden**

January 20, 2014 at 3:53 pm

Matt did say, "In general I wouldn't recommend accepting a guest blog post unless you are willing to vouch for someone personally or know them well."

That isn't throwing the baby out with the bathwater. It's saying "Don't give baths to babies unless you know them."

**James Davis**



January 20, 2014 at 4:35 pm

Ha Ha I agree Durant 😊



**Matt Sells**

January 20, 2014 at 5:36 pm

Durant, the issue is the broad terminology that Matt is using and I quote:

*"Back in the day, guest blogging used to be a respectable thing"*  
– Well it still is if you are not a spammer.

I agree that spammers should be penalized but just claiming that guest blogging is not respectful anymore is a slap in the face of many, many fine people.

Kalee, I realize they can decipher quality, I was being sarcastic.

Just FYI, I really do like Google's products so I am not one of the "haters". Just a guy with an opinion.



**Matt Sells**

January 20, 2014 at 5:38 pm

ha ha, Durant. You get a +1 from me for the analogy 😊



**Gabriella Sannino**

January 20, 2014 at 6:19 pm

++1's likes, tweets, et all simply brilliant!



**Samra Khan**

January 20, 2014 at 8:37 pm

And a +1 from me! 😊



**Tashreef Shareef**

January 21, 2014 at 7:54 am

LOL 😊 +1 from me as well..



**Matt Sells**

January 20, 2014 at 11:35 pm

Thanks for the clarification Matt!



**Dennis**

January 21, 2014 at 9:09 am

As long as the internet exists there will always be spammy practices and as long as Google exists they will always need a web spam public relations person. Now that is job security Matt.

Any system is only as good as its weakest link, and yes if Google wants to remain relevant they will always need to up their game.

Before Google there was DMOZ, the most comprehensive human-reviewed directory on the web as they claim. Are they still relevant? No, their weak link was

editors that were open to bribes.

Search engines became relevant. A ranking system primarily based on links or in other words web votes. The weakest link again comes down to people who are willing to give links based on bribes.

It always seems to come down to people and money. If you pay Google through AdWords for your link at the top of a page can that be considered a bribe or buying a link? Oh yes buying that link doesn't pass page rank so that purchase is fine.

Of course it's not as simple as I've mentioned. The fact remains that there will always be spammy, low quality practices in use and in order for Google to remain relevant they will always need to up their game.



**Tim**

January 20, 2014 at 1:13 pm

Hi Matt,

Is this something that is going to be manually targeted? Or built in to algorithms? I'm guessing both. Are you using this as a blanket statement, or will action only be taken against obvious manipulation?

There is still a lot of genuine guest blogging that goes on, do you suggest no following all links within them? Just in case?



**Nick Samuel**

January 20, 2014 at 4:42 pm

Looks like warning shots have been fired for the next algo update but it must be pretty hard to distinguish between a high quality post and a high quality paid post which makes me all the more interested to see how this plays out.



**Gareth Mailer**

January 20, 2014 at 1:14 pm

I think what irks me most is that Google feels it's in a position to tell people what they can or can't do online. So, a business owner, legitimately, decides to give some content to a high authority site i.e. a Mashable etc, gets a link back, and suddenly that's going to count against him (or her)?

I wouldn't bring this up, but it sounds like you want to enforce a blanket ban and have everyone singing from your hymn sheet, even when their intentions are legitimate i.e. driving traffic and creating value.

I get where you are coming from, but this is the way of the World – cars cause road crashes and people die, it doesn't mean we're going to stop improving standards and pushing forward.

The World throws curve balls and most of us have to deal, react and push forward – Google? Nah, we'll just take out the machete and forget the fact the majority of people who are trying to create value are being sidelined because the bad kids in the class find it easier to attract attention.

I approve of and applaud your efforts in targeting webspam, however I disapprove of any action which invariably has an impact on those who genuinely are trying to create value online.



**Matt Cutts**

January 20, 2014 at 3:24 pm

Hey Gareth, I think I've always been clear that webmasters can do whatever they want on their own site. But I've also tried to be clear that I believe Google has the right to defend our search results from low-quality or spam results in our opinion. So when I do a post like this, I'm trying to provide guidance on the sort of behavior or activity that Google would prefer not to reward. From where I'm sitting, there's enough spam taking place under the rubric of "guest blogging" that I wanted to provide people with a heads up.

But you can always do whatever you like on your website, in the same way that Google is able to decide not to return a website in our search results if we believe it should rank lower or shouldn't be returned.

**Jonathan Jones**

January 20, 2014 at 4:27 pm

Hey Matt,

Posted this on Reddit. Someone pointed out that your example is flawed. The person that reached out to you didn't in fact ask for money in return for the dofollow links. Instead, he offered the content and wanted the 2 dofollow links to remain within that article. Unless we are now saying that content is now considered payment?

I however do understand the premise behind your post, but I don't think your example is exactly the strongest of examples.

**Adam**

January 20, 2014 at 5:16 pm

Actually, the interpretation is flawed, not Matt's example. First of all, "dofollow" doesn't exist and never did. It's a fictional attribute created by SEO sheeple. Second, the "dofollow" links are intended for "SEO" benefit, which constitutes a form of what some brick and mortar businesses refer to as contra...service exchanged for service. Contra is a form of payment unto itself.

**Danny Sullivan**

January 20, 2014 at 10:17 pm

I think the problem is that you talk about this being the type of activity Google doesn't want to reward. That would be fine if Google would just do that, not reward the links with credit.

However, that's not what your doing. You're saying in this post that blog posts that Google deems done for only "SEO purposes" are now going to be considered spam and thus, people may get punished for them.

Punishing people is much different, and dramatic, from not rewarding. And it feeds into the increasing fear that people might get punished for anything.

Hey, I hate the type of requests that you cite. I get that the purpose is just to build up a bunch of links even if those aren't "earned" or deserved in the sense that Google originally wanted to use links for, as "votes" that represented that some site really vouched for another.

Your update helps, but no widgets infographics press releases directories etc etc etc — the list is getting tiresome.

Google basically doesn't want people trying to build links any longer, despite that having been Google advice for many years.

So just say that. Just say any attempt to actively build links might get someone banned in Google. That would sure make things easier.

Of course, the fact that Google still largely depends on links for how to rank sites sure makes that tough for the many sites that simply do not rank well for some terms. They're supposed to just hope that magically, they'll naturally earn links that help them achieve a decent ranking.

Yes, that does work for many sites. But many others, deserving sites, don't have that work for them. And so... what?

It's a strange world where when it comes to social media, Google is all promote promote promote. Or even in paid search, buy ads, buy ads, buy ads.

But when it comes to organic listings, it's just sit back and hope it works, and really don't actively go out and build links, even those are so important.

I know, I know ... Have great content, that's the way to attract the right links. I even agree.

And yet, there's a part of me that feels like enough is enough with the list of prohibited linking activities. I wish you'd just not count the links you don't think deserve credit.



**Srikar**

January 20, 2014 at 11:17 pm

You just spoke the hear out of every webmaster, blogger and small business owner out there. Now with all these so called "authority" websites in place, how on earth does a newbie [in terms of online presence, not knowledge] ever get exposure ? Yeah we all know the "have great content and get links naturally rant" but you know what ? It just doesn't work, for your "great" content to be found and appreciated, you need to be "found" in the first place and thats not going to happen, as Google wont let you build links that would let you be found, no matter how subtle the way is, and with all this nonsense of passing page rank crap, you have even scared every potential webmaster to give away a dofollow link, even naturally. so what do i do you ask ?  
inside voice : "GOOGLE ADWORDS they say muahahahhaa"...  
outloud: "have great content" ..arghh !!



**Steve Wiideman**

January 21, 2014 at 12:41 am

You're not alone on this viewpoint Danny.

A poor client of mine recently spent nearly \$6k on resources to remove links that a) were built before guidelines were ever published, b) were built by a competitor to hurt rankings, or c) were good links that came with "optimized anchors" due to the nature of the product and had to be modified, causing many great links to be removed altogether. Over \$2 mil in revenue lost within 6 months. Poor guy.

We as a community agree: If it's a guideline violation, don't count it. But PLEASE don't penalize it. If you want to penalize patterns of irregular activity, by all means go for it. But to impose manual actions because in 2004 some SEO guy who can't be reached built a bunch of links to a domain that switched hands three times in the last decade, is in my experience has been an

unnecessary cost to businesses who haven't used the work "link" since April 24th, 2012.

Eventually, webmasters will figure out that their links aren't being counted and will eventually stop targeting those links.

Joe's Plumbing Service in Faketown USA used to enjoy lots of traffic from Google pre-2012 and now gets penalized each time his name is mentioned on a community site or blog or charity he supports because the words "plumbing service" are often used in an anchor text. Meanwhile, Jack's Rooter gets all the traffic without lifting a finger and happens to be the worse service in the area. Jack's laughing at Joe because Joe is spending hundreds of dollars per month on resources removing links that should be HELPING him rank, but are pointed out by someone on the spam team in WMT as "unnatural". #bummer



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**Ahmad Wali**

January 21, 2014 at 4:12 am

I couldn't agree with you more Danny!

Matt, think of a small business owner or a webmaster who does not have big pockets to build a brand name or advertise.

We were told from the beginning that Google count links as "votes", but now all of the voting techniques are banned by Google. I understand writing remarkable content get you good links (sometimes). If you ask me, I would link to your blog openly. However, you would never link to my blog in any case. It takes a lot of effort and years to do the effort to become a brand. In my opinion, it is not possible for every small budget business owner to reach that point.

Now we have "content" creation method we can use to outrank other high authority websites (who've been in business from years).

Worse case is that penalizing the website owners for building spammy links. I remember, I paused all the link building activities after the launch of Penguin and it is now 2014. I can still see bunch of those links under my profile. If something use to work, please discount them rather penalizing owners. Or there should be a warning system to alert website owners.

I am not sure how much you are going to value our voice, but right now it is "might is right".

Regards



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**A R Mills**

January 21, 2014 at 4:33 am

Agree with you 100% Danny! Hasn't the time come to just stop using links as a ranking factor? I cannot think of any links now that are safe to get...even great content that get links naturally could suddenly come under fire if they end up on the wrong site or if it get's mistaken by google as unnatural!

Anchor Text – Dead

Directories – Dead

Articles – Dead

PR Articles – Dead

Infographics/Widgets – Dead

### Guest Blogging – Dead

Even through I still see the (Big Brands) full of this kind of linking and engaging in it daily! Only last month a major UK retailer sent me a free toy for a 'review' but only if I added the anchor text 'Dream Toys...' they are all over page 1 of google and will always get away with this!

Google have created a 'class system' on the internet and it's the lower and middle class who get rogered every time! lol

Anything left?



**Rae**

January 21, 2014 at 5:55 am

"I wish you'd just not count the links you don't think deserve credit."

The problem there Danny is they can't successfully find and discredit all of them. They can find and discredit the obvious, but most on their "spam list" done "well" are ones they can't detect. So, it's easier to have webmasters provide you a list (disavows), scare the ones that aren't crap sites providing the links into submission and damn those building the links as "examples" – dragging them into town square for a public hanging to serve as a warning to anyone who dare disobey the dictatorship.

Don't like it? Then move to a different country – despite the fact that on the proverbial internet earth, Google makes up 5 of the 7 continents.



**Jenny Halasz**

January 21, 2014 at 9:44 am

My biggest problem with the new rubric of SEO when it comes to linking is that it relies on the webmaster knowing anything about our little microcosm of the universe. True that webmasters should safeguard their sites against poor quality content – that's a no brainer. But to expect the average webmaster to know that he/she should place "nofollow" on their outbound links is giving them way too much credit.

So I have the same opinion of guest posting as of every other link building technique. If it's not brand building (h/t Eric Enge for the term), then it's probably spam. But to actively penalize people for this behavior just opens up a cottage industry of people to prey on the ignorant. Negative SEO happens (less often than people say, but it does). More damaging though, is the number of webmasters who fall victim to some slick talking snake oil salesman.

In my experience, the spammers have already moved on to the next spammy tactic, and the webmasters who fell for their schemes are collateral damage.

Now repeat offenders, I say go ahead and nail them to the wall. But for a first time offender, not counting and a notification might be a better way to go – not penalty, in my opinion. And the notification needs to be clear. "We found a pattern of unnatural links pointing to your site. Please see this article where we explain why this is a bad practice. If you continue this behavior, we may penalize you." Gives people a chance to track down who did it and put a stop to it. And send it to the contact email on the site. These people don't have webmaster tools accounts. They

don't even know such a thing exists. In the worst case scenario, the spammer may even own the WMT account.

Or better yet, just accept that linking is unnatural – it's marketing – and take it out of Google's algorithm. Focus purely on the quality and relevance of the content instead.

Matt, I know you have a thankless job. And most SEOs really do appreciate the efforts Google is taking to clean up results. Just please think of the little guy. They can't afford expensive SEOs to clean up their naive mistakes. As tempting as it is to say "they should know better," I challenge anyone who would say that to go to a non-marketing gathering of website owners and ask how many of them even know what "nofollow" means.

**JR Oakes**

January 21, 2014 at 9:51 am

Danny,

I think you have it spot on. The overall tone of what Google has done from a PR perspective over the last couple years has made anyone scared as sh\*t to link to any other sites. Google has said many times to produce great content that will earn links but they have embarked on a mission to scare webmasters into being very selective with who they link to. This benefits big brands with deep pockets and high trust, but makes it almost impossible for small sites to gain traction.

When we do guest blogging, we have 3 criteria (the site has to have good visibility, the site has to have good engagement, and the site has to be likely to send referral traffic ~relevant). Do we do this perfectly every time? probably not, but we try very very hard to meet this goal.

This article does nothing but scare webmasters and makes it harder for us to create value and gain traffic. It really is an elitist viewpoint and completely disregards the value of referral traffic and blurs any attempt at traffic outside of Google as an attempt to game Google.

The point about penalizing vs. not counting is a good one. Google has positioned themselves as judge and jury instead of their intended purpose which is to organize the world's information. We have all seen guest post sites that make our skin crawl. We have all received emails like the one Matt got. But I also get comment spam, scraped directory links, malware site links to our sites all the time. This doesn't mean that I need to go out and write an article on these practices. There will always be scummy people that try to take the easy road.

I think Google is throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Google could choose if they wanted to just discount low quality. They have the machinery to do it. There is a decision to make stuff punitive, and at the end of the day, that puts the power in the hands of brands and the black hats and makes it harder for the majority of us to do good work.

**Tom Forrest**

January 31, 2014 at 5:35 pm

I agree 100% with Danny.

**Jeff**

January 20, 2014 at 10:53 pm

"But you can always do whatever you like on your website, in the same way that Google is able to decide not to return a website in our search results if we believe it should rank lower or shouldn't be returned."

This, of course, isn't actually the case, because Google and web publishers are inherently different entities in an asymmetric relationship. To suggest that Google and web publishers enjoy the same operating freedoms is disingenuous at best, and downright criminal at worst.

A web publisher can do whatever he wants (whether trading links for money, or writing posts for links), but Google does not enjoy the same freedom to disavow these publications for their actions thanks to antitrust laws across many jurisdictions.

Simply put, what you are describing – using Google's position to affect how content is published and monetized – is arguably illegal.

This is likely the case, not simply because Google effectively owns web search, but because denying alternative means of exchange (content for links as a means of exchange) means publishers are pushed to advertising, where Google also owns the market.

It is a dangerous game for Google to manipulate content monetization when Google owns both the means of discovery and the primary method of revenue generation for web publishers. Very dangerous, indeed.

**Matt Cutts**

January 21, 2014 at 12:13 pm

Jeff, I've gotten to work with regulators around the world to explain how Google's search ranking works. In each case (for example, with the FTC and EC), the regulators concluded that our core web search rankings are not an issue. Before the FTC closed its investigation, I believe the public stat I saw was that Google produced over nine million documents for the investigation. Likewise, multiple court cases have upheld that Google's web search rankings are our opinions, and are protected by the First Amendment.

So I respectfully disagree with you. I maintain that web site owners can do what they want on their own websites. However, I also maintain that Google can rank websites in our search results in the order that we believe to be best for our users—especially when we are taking action against low-quality or spammy sites in order to protect the relevance of our users' search experience.

In fact, I would argue that a large part of Google's success as a search engine is due to our continual efforts to provide the most relevant web search results we can while minimizing the spam and low-quality results that our users encounter.

**Daniel Owen**

January 21, 2014 at 6:54 am

Okay, I'm calling it: it's time Google's monopoly is broken up. Matt, your reply to Gareth just demonstrates why. You say "But you can always do whatever you like on your website, in the same way that Google is able to decide not to return a website in our search results if we believe it should

rank lower or shouldn't be returned".

You have too much hold over the internet and you simply think you can just arbitrarily decide on the internet's course, and sweep it away with a 'it's up to us what we do'.

I used to be a massive believer in google. And were happy leaving you to do what you wanted. But then you went negative and hurt so many legitimate businesses. Suddenly the danger became all too obvious. Your post above will now be getting business owners around the world very nervous "am I going to get penalised or not - is this going to hurt me so much that I can't pay my staff"

So, lets stick a fork in it. This is a very dangerous position for a democracy to be in. You have too much power and your choice to go 'negative' has caused too much damage.

It really is time 'we' the people, took control of the internet back. It's time we lobbied our respective governments to do something about this worrying situation.

**Nick Ker**

January 21, 2014 at 2:42 pm

Um, correct me if I am wrong here, but I don't think anyone is being forced to use Google. If you would prefer to search the internet with a less strict search engine, you are free to do so.

**Daniel Owen**

January 22, 2014 at 4:03 am

Nick, i understand what you are saying, and yes I 'used' to think that.

However we are people who understand the internet. I changed to another engine a while ago and am very happy. The majority of people don't and couldn't even change their preferred search engine even if they wanted to.

It is exactly the same as the anti-trust problem that Microsoft had with IE. Anyone 'could' change their browser, but little did. In fact this is way worse as people not changing browser only harmed the browser companies. People not changing their search engine means we're all in hock to google..and have to live by their whims.

**Dave Z**

January 22, 2014 at 8:35 am

People may feel difficult changing their browser settings or switching from — say — Chrome to Maxthon (the former which I'm using). As long as people make the effort, they won't have to feel forced to use or be forced to use anything Google if they don't feel like it.

Some may also feel like Google has a so-called monopoly. It probably happens that many people enjoy using their services despite what they've done...or not done.

As long as you're using another search engine that does or doesn't do what you expect, then you should be good to go.

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**Adam**

January 22, 2014 at 10:08 am

Daniel: I don't know who you are or who you speak for, but "we" doesn't apply to all of us. So please don't act like you represent me, or anyone else who might happen to agree with me. That's incredibly pretentious on your part.

Your rants...and I'll call them rants because they in no way resemble points...are completely asinine. You're mad at Google because they have a "monopoly". First of all, there isn't anything inherently wrong with a monopoly. Second, they don't have one. They have competition. However, the competition is either inferior (e.g. Bing) or beyond invasive (e.g. Baidu). So Google is the dominant dog. That's not the same thing as a monopoly, though; competition exists, and thus a monopoly does not. As a side note, we're also talking a monopoly on free services, so it's not like they're lining their pockets directly from search (yes, they sell ads, but that's not direct revenue generation from the product itself).

Here's something to consider...you want people to lobby governments to "take back the Internet". What would that accomplish? That would mean the enactment of overreaching laws, excessive regulation, and more costs to be incurred by search engines, which in turn drive up the costs of things such as Adwords, which in turn makes them less effective for the people using them. So if you want government to get involved, we're going to have to pay for that privilege. And for what? Because "Google controls the entire Internet" (which they don't)? That is absolute idiocy.

You mention Microsoft and their browser antitrust issues. It's much better now that Microsoft has competition, isn't it? Made IE better. Look at who the biggest competitor is...Google. The same company that you want the government to interfere with is providing the competition that keeps Microsoft from gaining a monopoly. So your freedom of choice is in large part due to the company you're ragging on.

Like Nick Ker said, no one's forcing you to use Google. You can go to Bing. You can go to Lycos. You can go to several other places to perform searches and do other things. They don't have a monopoly on the Internet.

**Jordan Dove**

January 22, 2014 at 1:46 pm

It's a republic =|

Google isn't forcing you to use their search ranks.

Yes it did hurt some businesses; The majority were business' who hired freelancers who most likely Grey or Black hatted, received a penalty and probably didn't know how to clean the mess up for their rankings to "eventually" bounce back.

Just like Facebook has turned into a "Pay for Exposure" for business pages — One of my clients used to receive 750 views per post with 25+ likes and a couple shares per post.. Now it organically reaches 200-300 people with no shares and a very mild like ratio... However, when we do pay we reach a targeted demo who has not seen the products and services so it can be MORE beneficial as well.

Google is a BUSINESS and provides a SERVICE(s). Just because they grew their "search" more quickly and stronger than the competition.

Let's be reminded the internet is a massive place, and you can do JUST FINE without ranking on the first page of Google, just be creative and always think "outside the box".



**Carlos Lorenzo**

May 20, 2014 at 7:08 am

Daniel, you are not alone in your thoughts, or 'rant' as some people here has categorized your freedom of speech. It is obvious that Google search is a product and as such, we are free to choose it or not. Departing from that legitimate right of Google, to sell their product and to write their policies, there not much we can do about changing their subtle ways to return your site or not in their search results. But the fact, Google is legit, does not mean we are to be told what to do on the internet. I understand Matt is just the visible face and indirectly is held responsible for the doings of his staff and the guidelines of his company, but I think he should hear people more often for the sake of the future of his company. Google is nothing without us, the clients. When you constantly overlook people's opinion and engage in absurd witch hunting practices, you are playing with your brand's well deserved good name. I, like you Daniel, had a lot of trust deposited in Google, which I don't have at the moment. I am always impressed at how many people stand for Google when you legitimately give them it reviews. I am prone to think that they want Matt to think they are cool or something. Or maybe their sites have not been affected by Penguin or Panda updates...yet. I think everybody has the right to 'rant' for what they think is fair. I do hope that Matt's 'dirty job' brings us those clean, fast, useful, helpful and fair for all Google search results. At the moment, I am completely sure this is not the case. You cannot tell people, hey, we want your good content, hey, linking is good, hey, no, not those links, hey pagerank is no more, disavow those links, and go use some guest posts, huh, know what I think? now, guest posts are not cool. We are your clients for Christ sake, we pay your bills. Why do you favor big companies that pay for their SEO and advertise on top of search results even though their content is spammy by nature in most cases? I have a more than modest blog about travel and photography in Barcelona, I used to have good SERPs, and yes, travel and accomodation companies used to come to my site and advertise their products. About 4 or 5 of them. Compare that to all the big money Google is making with ad campaigns of these very companies directly on search results or in Google Adsense. But Ok. Penguin came, and the companies went away. Well, bad luck. Still I don't think that was wrong though. I have tons of content in my blog, being posted since 2006 almost daily. Why do you chase me instead of the big guys? Why do I have to work on my 'SEO' like a pro to try to understand the constant ups and downs of your algorithm if I am just a normal blogger?. You can do whatever you want to do with my blog now. Nothing worse can happen. I hope you read this Matt. No offense intended.



**Krystian Szastok**

January 20, 2014 at 1:16 pm

I think that any SEO tactic once abuse should cease to be effective.  
What used to be guest blogging became a new way to spam the Web.  
I do really hope you guys update the algorithms to the point so they can verify when

content is not just unique but helpful.  
Only then you'll fully get rid of spam.

**Stéphane Leduc**

January 20, 2014 at 1:16 pm

That's a great move!

Hello user experience. Goodbye low quality content.

**Neil Batchelor**

January 20, 2014 at 1:17 pm

Matt,

Great post, Thanks. You mention

*In general I wouldn't recommend accepting a guest blog post unless you are willing to vouch for someone personally or know them well.*

Two scenarios I am curious about (Both in whitehat "above the board" context):

1. Company A owns company B. Company B wants to help promote company A products as an upsell or information for their customers. Would you advise "nofollow"?
2. Company C works closely with Company D helping other local companies. Either want to help promote the other. Should any links be "nofollow"?

Look forward to your thoughts,  
Neil

**Richard Horvath**

January 20, 2014 at 1:18 pm

You nailed it on the head with "this is why we can't have nice things in the SEO space." It made me literally laugh out loud. It's a shame some bad apples ruin it for the bunch. With that said, it still seems to be a worthwhile endeavor when, like you said, you have a personal relationship with the guest. Then, it's not just about the links. It's about the referral and branding opportunity (i.e. other important marketing tactics).

**Will Stevens**

January 20, 2014 at 1:19 pm

With respect, Matt, this sounds like the webspam team isn't capable of doing its job properly. You admit in your post that there are still high quality guest posters out there, yet you seem determined to clamp down on them just as hard as the low quality posters. Can you justify that?

Punishing a tactic en masse and shrugging and saying "spammers spoiled it for everyone" is a confession that you're incapable of distinguishing between the good and bad in any meaningful way.

The upshot of this will be a move to shadier tactics that people know work and that the webspam team doesn't seem able to tackle.

Well done, you've just made the internet that little bit worse.

**Kev**

January 20, 2014 at 5:04 pm

I strongly suggest that Matt asks the spam team to read a great book.

Darwin, C. (1859) On the Origin of Species

In it, the team will discover that the spammers will adapt to the environment or

die.

My guess is that they will find new ways of thriving, such as right now, they are creating millions of back links from low quality sites to their competitors. The result is, that instead of writing great content, quality site owners waste time asking for link removal before ultimately disavowing.

With these latest changes Matt, the spammers now have another dirty trick up their sleeves!

Write a load of guest blog posts to our competitors sites!

Please Matt, direct the team to reward positively and please abandon negative actions against sites. It is fundamentally flawed!

**Jake**

January 20, 2014 at 9:06 pm

I agree completely. I have a few clients on whose website I work where I have found large volumes of inbound links with shady/irrelevant anchor text and from domain names that would be considered offensive by many. I have to devote a certain amount of my time to running in-bound link audits because my client's competitors have decided to play dirty, which means less time doing much more useful tasks.

I get that Google wants to slap the hands of those who look to abuse the system, but having low quality links not count should be punishment enough. For those companies who want to live in the world of webspam, they will simply be wasting their money while those who want to create meaningful content can be freed up to do so.

**Adam Abbott**

January 21, 2014 at 6:27 am

Maybe if everybody started pointing spammy links at mattcutts.com he'd realize the impact of punishment rather than discounting?

**Bill**

January 21, 2014 at 6:55 am

Another fine example of the "Law of Unintended Consequences".

**Gareth Mailer**

January 20, 2014 at 1:21 pm

I think this latest development can be neatly summed up in just one expression:

"Can open, worms EVERYWHERE".

**Karina**

January 20, 2014 at 1:22 pm

IMHO this is (and always will be) Google's fault — because when Google highlights something as "valuable", people will try everything to make their website / blog / whatever "valuable" too. In fact it's pretty funny to watch people chasing Google's tail. And I can be wrong, but the next thing which will devalue is authority. In fact, I could bet.

**Stoian Ciprian**

January 20, 2014 at 1:22 pm

I think you should use google+ authorship for guest blogging. I would be a good thing, because you can measure the relevance of the blog that host guest posts and the relevance of the guest post author. What do you think? 😊

**Mike**

January 20, 2014 at 1:22 pm

My hope is that this won't just end up a blanket penalty any time you happen to have a blog post on another site and instead just be a means of weeding out more of the bad & spammy. There are more than enough sites that do legitimate guest posts that shouldn't get slapped because others are ruining it for the rest of us. In which case I'm wondering if the smart course of action is to just NoFollow all links in any Blog post that don't point to destinations on the root domain of the blog itself so as not to invoke the ire of potential future penalties for guest posting.

**Don Sturgill**

January 20, 2014 at 1:24 pm

Writing articles for the internet is a perfectly legitimate way to get known as a writer and help folks become aware of your website. Personally, Matt, I think you are off-track here. If you want to curb the problem, discount sites that exist only to sell ads and links ... but don't tell writers they can only write for their own site now. Links are the fabric of the internet.

**Sid Heroor**

January 20, 2014 at 3:45 pm

I think the point really is with Google's PR algorithm \*and\* dofollow. Having links is definitely the fabric of the Internet but link building for the purpose for gaming is not. End of the day, if there is traffic to a website, either via search results or other organic means, then that website has value. If real people are reading content that's useful for them on that website, then it should be a good enough argument for the site to be ranked high for that content. The problem is that there isn't an algorithmic way of figuring that out today. So, the solution should really be – keep most links as nofollow. It doesn't affect people reading content and using those links. From Google's perspective, nofollow doesn't affect PR in anyway and so, the value to the end reader remains the same.

**Don Sturgill**

January 20, 2014 at 5:41 pm

Why in the world would a writer want to nofollow a link — unless it is a demonstration link pointing to a junk site?

If I site your work as a reference to something I am talking about, I WANT you to get credit for providing that information.

Every link is a vote, and I'll be darned if I will give up my right to vote out of fear that the algorithm is going to be offended, Sid.

Get rid of the gamers and spammers ... please ... but don't do it by machine-gunning every writer around to do it.

**Danmyson**

January 21, 2014 at 9:54 am

Exactly, why would you want to contribute a piece of content for no value anyway? Is content contribution going to be penalised is the question. If no is the answer then you cannot penalise guest posts. Why not advocate much higher value to the decent sites that link to a site ahead of ones with no visitors, or social scene that tend to be the dud sites anyway.

**Randy Milanovic**

January 20, 2014 at 5:02 pm

Wise words Don.

**Don Sturgill**

January 20, 2014 at 5:41 pm

Thank you, Randy. Your encouragement is much appreciated.

**Abby**

January 20, 2014 at 1:25 pm

Thanks for the warning about guest blogging as a link building technique.

I am just curious as what is or will be the most successful link building strategy of 2014. Looking forward to your reply

**Jim**

January 20, 2014 at 1:30 pm

You bozos really think Matt or his team care about you or your "legit" site/practices.

Let's be real here folks.... They don't want any SEO done. Period!

**Kelly Patchet**

January 20, 2014 at 1:30 pm

It's too bad that legitimate avenues for serious content creators to gain exposure to new audiences and genuinely contribute important insight is inevitably perverted by those who always need to game the system.

**Jeremy Rivera**

January 20, 2014 at 1:32 pm

Uhm Matt?

"someone sent me a spam email offering money to get links that pass PageRank"

Your example did \*NOT INCLUDE A MONETARY SOLICITATION.\* Wwhat they are offering was to write "a high quality article that is-

- 100% original
- Well written
- Relevant to your audience and
- Exclusive to you"

So are you saying that *a uniquely written article is a monetary unit* or did you leave out the part where they offered money as well as the content writing?

(On a side note: Obviously though these guys are idiots who have automated their outreach methods for email spamming YOU of all people, and I wouldn't personally trust them to deliver quality content if they're that lazy in their outreach.)

**HilarityEnsues**

January 20, 2014 at 4:13 pm

Reread the comment. He holds the part where the solicitor implies some sort of compensation for the webmaster/blogger.

**Jeremy Rivera**

January 21, 2014 at 9:42 am

I re-read it and re-read it and came to the same conclusion:  
 "Should you be open to the idea, we can consider making suitable contribution, befitting to high standard of services that your blog offers to larger audience." and then talks about the quality of the article he's offering. The contribution is an article. Not money.



#### Tea Silvestre

January 20, 2014 at 4:33 pm

I believe his highlighted phrase "we can consider making suitable contribution" was where he was pointing to a possible monetary exchange.



#### Rikki

January 20, 2014 at 1:34 pm

There is a lot of publishers and writers using guest blogging to provide us with great content so it would be a huge shame for the whole industry to be penalised. Obviously something needed to be done as it has turned into a spammy tactic for a lot of people but I would hope Google can identify and only target the low quality stuff.



#### Tom Goering

January 20, 2014 at 1:36 pm

Thank goodness the limited guest articles I have are only from Sailors who don't have an agenda beyond helping others figure out if the Navy is for them!



#### Melissa Fach

January 20, 2014 at 1:41 pm

Those are the guest posts people need and Google should be happy with.



#### Jason McGovern

January 20, 2014 at 1:36 pm

You know what Matt, shame on you

We get it; some people have been abusing guest blogging. And yes, those individuals shouldn't prosper at the expense of the 'quality' of your search results. No one disagrees with that.

However, to impugn hundreds of well-meaning site owners and make them second-guess a perfectly valid form of web promotion because your teams can't differentiate between the baby and the bathwater is getting ridiculous.

It's up to you to differentiate the noise from the signal and maybe it's time Google took some responsibility for that instead of propagandizing and bullying the IM community into a kafke-esque self policing



#### Jason

January 20, 2014 at 1:36 pm

Is this where you take a scatter gun approach and nail legit businesses to the wall because the algo can't determine a legit guest post over something that is forced?

There are some incredible articles out there that have been written as a guestpost. Will they be punished because you think it might be there simple because of pagerank or will you look at engagement metrics and social activity?

So close to being good transparency but saying its dead and that it's all our fault is a little insulting

**Melissa Fach**

January 20, 2014 at 1:37 pm

Matt, there are some sites that have guest bloggers that work hard to weed out the junk. Moz being one of them. We approve very few, but the guest bloggers we approve provide us with great information. I don't know if it is fair to say guest blogging is "done". I think you have to consider the sites that make an effort to publish only quality, unique and helpful information by guest bloggers. To do this takes a lot of time, effort and many people.

I hope Google isn't going to start penalizing blogs with guest posts. Obviously there are many with junk, but I thought that was what Panda was for. Also, there is no way for you all to know which sites pay writers to write for them. I get paid well to guest blog and I work as an editor with blogs that pay others to write quality. I don't think guest blogging is done by a long shot. I do think that quality over quantity needs to be a theme in the future.

**Philip Tomlinson**

January 20, 2014 at 2:26 pm

I'm assuming it won't be targeting the sites that harbor guest posts, but rather examine whether a majority of website's back links also have "guest post," "guest author" or other tell tale signs of abusive guest postings.

In some sense, we might see a similar to Penguin. Instead of anchor text abuse, it will try and detect guest post abuse using a whole slew of factors.

**Philip Tomlinson**

January 20, 2014 at 2:32 pm

I really should proofread my comments. Would love it if the moderator (Matt Cutts?) could run a spell check on my last comment for me!

**Don Sturgill**

January 20, 2014 at 5:43 pm

Write on, Melissa Fach.

**Matt Sells**

January 20, 2014 at 6:12 pm

*I don't know if it is fair to say guest blogging is "done".*

Spot on. Way to broad of a statement.

**Matt Sells**

January 20, 2014 at 6:14 pm

*I don't know if it is fair to say guest blogging is "done" << Spot on.*

**Melissa Fach**

January 20, 2014 at 1:37 pm

That would be "theme", not them in the last sentence in my comment.

**Bill Hartzler**

January 20, 2014 at 1:42 pm

Just like anything else, though, you'll have to come out and say that there are going to be exceptions to the rule. Does this mean that I cannot have a column on Search Engine Watch

or Search Engine Land and that potentially be considered a "guest blog post"?

And then there's the occasional guest author or guest "blogger" on the Wall Street Journal or NY Times site. They have blogs.

I agree, though, that it needs to be very clear, especially in Google's Webmaster Guidelines, that it's about low-quality/spam guest posting and guest articles.



**Jared**

January 20, 2014 at 2:10 pm

Yup, there are certainly going to be exceptions, there's simply no way that quality guest blogging is going to come to a halt. Authorship and basic data gathering (finding out who "vouches" for who with +1/circles) from G+ should help give the algos some insight on what's actually a worthy guest post.



**Christy V**

January 20, 2014 at 7:36 pm

Let's not encourage furthering the Google-grip on the internet. They've got the go-to search engine, you now have to possess a G+ account to use YouTube, now let's tie that and Google authorship to who is allowed to guest post or use links in posts?!

I used to believe they were looking to provide quality serps - more and more it seems they're just looking to take over, regardless if the results ring of genuine helpfulness.



**Patricia S**

May 1, 2014 at 6:10 pm

I agree completely, Christie. Google does many things that make my life much more interesting, and the internet much more useful. But it also does things that make me very nervous - they have far too much money at their disposal to play with and far too much power. But one of the things I see as especially worrisome is their ability to influence and ultimately control to a very large extent what gets known (on the internet). Look at what they've done already to how many upstanding, basically innocent businesses over the last number of years. This arrogant recklessness that can greatly harm real people is not benign in my view, nor is the likely trajectory of use of that type of power benign.



**Marie Haynes**

January 20, 2014 at 1:45 pm

It sounds to me like the main message is that guest blogging is ok as long as the primary motive is not to get links. As Melissa noted, some high quality sites like Moz will accept guest posts. I have guest posts on Moz but I don't anticipate I'll be penalized because of them. As Matt mentioned, the guest posts may be ok if "you are willing to vouch for someone personally or know them well". It's possible though that any links in my author bio may be simply discounted. Also, if I have author bios all across the web with obviously manipulative anchor text, then I could be moving into penalty territory.



**Tomas**

January 20, 2014 at 1:48 pm

Do guest blogging to attract new readers and get traffic, it should be fine. I hope 😊

**Kurt**

January 20, 2014 at 1:46 pm

As a blogger who's been following Matt's suggestions here re:guest blogging since day 1, I'm happy to see this declaration of the death of so-called guest posting. I'm sick of my email box being clogged by just the sort of messages Matt reproduces in this post, and I'm sick of people thinking I'm so stupid that I don't recognize their note for what it is: a clumsy subterfuge to obtain a link from my site to theirs. These requests are right up (or actually down) there with the Nigerian lottery scams in my book. Thanks Matt!

**Daniel**

January 20, 2014 at 1:49 pm

Why does google take no action against blackhat blogs? There is a very active blackhat system posting on a high amount of (partly related) blogs. Ranks go rocketing to #1 spots and google does not catch them or only after months and months.

For example nederlandsegokken.nl, check the backlink profile. I guess this is clearly blackhat mis-using blogs. How come google does accept this Matt?

**Dan**

January 20, 2014 at 1:49 pm

There appears to be a fear in the comments above that a penalty is coming that will blanket penalise all guest blogs. This is a bold article by Matt and is sure to stir up a lot of conversation, but the fact is Google don't do anything in half measures. Clearly low end guest blogging has an impact of Search results. Furthermore, this style of content is simply bloating the Web for no real benefit other than to prop up sites that generally aren't deserving of being propped up. Bring on the algorithm update!

**Tim**

January 20, 2014 at 1:52 pm

Matt, you just said **"So stick a fork in it: guest blogging is done; it's just gotten too spammy. In general I wouldn't recommend accepting a guest blog post unless you are willing to vouch for someone personally or know them well. Likewise, I wouldn't recommend relying on guest posting, guest blogging sites, or guest blogging SEO as a linkbuilding strategy."**

I have only 1 guest post on my blog and he is an SEO that I know personally and reached out to after he wrote an article because I liked it. In this case, it is a personal connection and someone I am willing to vouch for. He does good work. But how in the world can you know that?

How can Google know whether a guest post is spam or if it's authentic? How can they know if a blog owner reached out to another blogger or if the blogger reached out to the blog owner? This sounds pretty difficult to me. So I would like some clarification on what will happen if we have guest posts on our sites and what you mean by **"guest blogging is done"**.

**Kevin Mullett**

January 20, 2014 at 4:11 pm

And to take Tim's question a step further:

Now it is my responsibility as a contributor to monitor a blog for proper no follow usage, and into the future? We don't always have control over that, and despite our efforts, not every blog that provides relevance and value is performing even baseline best practices. Should I (and clients) just walk away from the potential visibility on a high traffic blog/community because their site is slow, has poor

grammar, doesn't use no follows, and I don't have the rapport yet to suggest they fix it? Am I left to guess arbitrarily which blogs are ok to contribute too and which are not?

Asking for a friend.

**Shamim**

January 20, 2014 at 1:56 pm

To me, people don't guest blog only for link building. For the business expansion; people can do that too.

**Kev**

January 20, 2014 at 2:01 pm

I've been identified as a spammer in error  
Could you please advise how we can rectify this  
Thanks  
Kev

**George**

January 20, 2014 at 2:03 pm

Matt definitely has a more stern tone in this post. Any guest blog that fits the low-quality profile he describes is most likely going to get nailed in the near future. Here are the main characteristics of a low-quality guest blogging site that I took away from this:

- \*Most articles are 200-400 words and low quality (no images, poor grammar, etc.)
- \*Sites where anybody can post (any crap can get in)
- \*Many articles are off-topic and don't match the subject of the blog itself
- \*Keyword rich anchor-text in articles

**Michelle Lowery**

January 20, 2014 at 2:04 pm

I have to agree with Bill, Melissa and Matt Sells. This is like saying SEO is dead because a few SEO "experts" use unethical tactics. We all know full well how many reputable and honest SEOs there are out there. The same can be said for writers and bloggers.

Yes, a TON of sites still produce terrible, low-quality content, and a lot of people will still write for them because they (unfortunately) believe a low-quality link is better than no link at all. But I'm one of those writers Melissa mentioned who writes for several sites other than my own--most paid, a couple not. Does this make me a spammer? Does it lower the quality of those sites that invite me to write for them?

No, and no. Matt, please do not lump me--a true writer who creates high-quality content--in with the people who call themselves writers, but produce junk, simply because I am published on sites other than my own.

Do I get a backlink to my site from my bio? Of course I do. Is that the only reason I guest post? Of course it isn't. Guest posting is about much more than link building.

It's one thing to proclaim guest posting as an ineffective link-building method. It's quite another to warn us about allowing it or practicing it. If Google is unable to separate the quality from the junk, then that's the issue that needs to be addressed, not an entire practice that helps to fuel the digital marketing industry in many ways other than link building.

In fact, I have to wonder why I still see so many eHow and wikiHow articles at the top of the SERPs post Panda. Can we maybe take a closer look at that before we make the call on guest posting?

**Jay**

January 20, 2014 at 2:11 pm

As Melissa had said, surely guest blogging as a whole can't be done?

A site as respected and with the authority as Moz.com, i'm sure guest blogging is an acceptable link, so it's really a matter of where, and how the line of what's spam and what isn't, is drawn.

**Nick Roshon**

January 20, 2014 at 2:16 pm

How much longer until Google stops using links all together? This seems like a much better solution than dictating who can write for which blogs, what they can link to or reference, etc. Google's mission should be ranking the best content, not dictating how the best content should be written IMO.

**Paul Naybour**

January 20, 2014 at 2:16 pm

Matt,

Well I am not really surprised that guest blogging is a new form of spam. As one door closes another opens up.

The really stupidity is that someone sent to a spam e-mail

*"to further promote our clients and when I came across your blog I was very impressed with the fan following that you have established."*

My guess this that their client when straight to the spam investigation team.

Quite funny really is it wasn't so stupid.

Paul

**Bill Sebald**

January 20, 2014 at 2:20 pm

This is really fuzzy to me right now. On one hand, guest posting is as old as the newspaper. I have a point of view and others want to share it as an editorial. Awesome! Valid! But, sometimes those editorials are commercial. Invalid for Google. Got it.

Then Google gave us authorship to be used on sites where an author may actually be rewarded for a "guest post." Again, awesome (even as the authorship pics decline)! Meanwhile, some SEOs got lazy and turned it into a cheap tactic that many of us hoped Google would be able to filter out. Boo!!!!

I'm with everyone above - please don't damn the universe because of the invalid use of the tactic. I enjoy guest posts. I'd hate to see a site get hurt because they were algorithmically miscategorized for a spammy guest post. For the sake of not spreading any FUD in the SEO space (because I really don't want to suffer through it), maybe you can clarify a bit more on this one.

**Dan Kern**

January 20, 2014 at 2:20 pm

Hey Matt, I couldn't agree with you more. Scaled guest blogging has gotten gross, and I've never really focused on much b/c it just felt spammy. But, I would have to imagine that if a business/blogger had the opportunity to write a guest article on a respected website within the niche, that passing up on the opportunity would be silly. If there is a page on the

business/blogger's website that needs to be referenced in context of the article, along with links to other websites (to help illustrate a point), then I also don't see why a link cannot be placed if the content supports the need. The question remains whether or not the business/blogger would have to "nofollow" that link. It seems silly to have to nofollow your own link, but allow the links to the other websites to be followed. The business/blogger did the hard work of creating quality content on a quality website, and isn't allowed to have the link followed by Google? Of course, all links could be set to "nofollow" ...but that doesn't help Google either...since those links deserve credit as well. Of course, these situations are rare in comparison to how much guest posting has been spammed...but I think any future algorithm change needs to account for quality situations like this. My \$0.02 from a whitehat SEO and content strategist.

**Bartosz Góralewicz**

January 20, 2014 at 2:22 pm

Is it a warning before next update? 😊

**Mike Gracia**

January 20, 2014 at 2:23 pm

Matt, towards the end of the video, where you mention taking "appropriate action", I'm kinda hoping that by 'action' you're not taking about penalising or reducing the value of guest posts in general and instead mean hitting out just at the 'wrong' type of 'guest post'?

What worries me and likely others, is whether there is a risk of guest posts harming a site even if they are high quality? By high quality what I personally mean is along the lines of a regular guest contributor column to a highly topical, well respected industry blog have has strict moderation processes, that involves no money exchange. Blogs of similar standard to SEL etc.

Surely what I describe above isn't a bad thing and shouldn't cause issues? Can you reassure folks that if Google does take action against guest posting in general, efforts will be made to NOT throw 'babies out with the bathwater', by a blanket cull on guest posts regardless of quality & authority?

Thanks 😊

Mike.

**Corey Northcutt**

January 20, 2014 at 2:24 pm

Largely in agreement with Melissa.. I've also certainly seen some big abuse of guest posts that Google is very wise to address (with especially bad signals- being 100% guest posts, charging to post, having no actual human audience). You use the phrase "guest posting sites" a few times in your videos, and those are the ones that it made me consider. But it's obviously hugely different if this affects Moz/SEJ for SEO, NetworkWorld/CNET for technical content; where the real marketing value already outweighs the SERP value in my experience, if the writing is good.

I don't agree with the statement "if you're doing a lot of guest blogging then you're hanging out with really bad company." It's a fair assessment of many- there are quite a few sausage-grinder-style guest posting services out there now that make constant rounds to what's basically a minor evolution of the content farm. But on a niche level, I've invested more than a decade building real relationships with all sorts of people in a very particular vertical, including many of the best journalists, channel partners, etc. When I guest post, it's consistently relevant and involving real publications, and it's always expert content that's never written by a charge-by-the-word writer. I know we're not alone in doing real PR through guest posting as well- which tends to pay off far more directly than it does via organic search.

Three years ago I'd have had faith that Google would simply become skilled enough to

devalue all of the junk, never hurting the good guys, so I was never really concerned when I saw that a new webspam update was coming out. But I have to wonder if the legitimate marketing that you praised in the first few videos could actually be penalized rather than devalued in 2014?

**Philip Stancil**

April 30, 2014 at 12:53 pm

I agree with what Corey's saying, especially the part at the end. I also used to assume Google would protect the good guys, but in recent updates, the algo has been changing to penalize things that used to be promoted by Google.

I'm a fan of you, Matt, and of Google. I'm not a hater. I know your task is daunting (read: impossible), and I'm just impressed that you get up every morning and keep trying. (The Incredibles intro comes to mind – <http://youtu.be/YveIFphNcp4?t=54s>).

However, I do have to say that it feels like you guys have made the conscious decision to frequently allow the good guys to take the fall in the name of defeating spam. I know you already know this, but **please remember that many of us are good people trying to make real livings**. The restrictions and changes you guys continue to require are simply not something the average business owner can keep up, nor should they have to. I know it always comes down to making good content, and then sharing it with real people. But to then have to consciously think about nofollows (and oh so much more) is more than people should have to do, and oftentimes more than they will do. It takes hours and hours to keep on top of this stuff.

**I ask this: if Google used to encourage something (i.e. guest posts) that is no longer encouraged, instead of penalizing us for those efforts, simply devalue them. That's the only thing I can see as being a fair solution to the good SEOs out there.**

**Zeke**

January 20, 2014 at 2:26 pm

One can only assume Google can't identify all types of guest posts. Sure, obvious when the author is 'guest post' or it says so in the category, tags or URL. It was only a matter of time before automation and services come along to capture the gold rush for the latest fad. Tools and services to cater to the need.

Some of what you said makes sense, some does not. Looks like another read between the lines advice situations.

In the end, it's up to marketers to recognize good, suitable opportunities.

Any public trend showing some kind of promise is likely to be milked and exploited online. Especially when production costs are lower.

Content creation (articles, infographics) naturally create opportunity. And with it, a load of crap. The bad comes with the good, and outnumbers at about 99:1.

Guest blogging isn't going anywhere, its gone mainstream. Those that don't know how to effectively insert themselves will suffer the wrath of G.

One can not merely follow the advice of 'create great content', its a field of dreams out there. Without distribution, they do not come. Guest posts wear many hats, distribution of the brand being one of them.

My guess is this comment will not be published, but it could create some interesting discussion.

**Tom**

January 20, 2014 at 2:35 pm

The time must be near for Google to fundamentally change the algorithm to no longer rely on links to provide PageRank. I'm sure you guys are already working on this, it must be a matter of when and not if.

**Spencer Padway**

January 20, 2014 at 2:35 pm

I think as with all of these kinds of post, guest blogging as a form of link building will be devalued, and spammy, low quality, mass guest posts will be dinged. If the guest post is a natural post and a well written article then you don't need to worry about the "link juice", the referral traffic will provide value by itself. I'm guessing they will use language semantics and user data to identify crappy guest posts.

**Jason Falls**

January 20, 2014 at 2:46 pm

Like other commentors, I'm concerned there will be accompanying penalties for future guest bloggers. As shocking as it may be to many in the SEO/web-spam world, sometimes we guest post for reasons other than link building. In fact, I've never written a guest post for anyone and asked for a link. I do it because either I'd like to get in front of their audience, their audience may be interested in something I have to say ... etc., etc. An all or nothing view of this will hurt your algorithm more than help it, should penalties come with these types of activities. All for ridding the rankings of spam-like behavior, but an all-or-nothing approach is a slippery slope.

**Gabriella Sannino**

January 20, 2014 at 2:48 pm

While I agree with a few comments in here, I'm really ~~puzzled~~ not surprised about your article. At the end of the day Matt, as a content developer/marketer I welcome and promote relevant content whether on my site or what my clients and I deem supportive of their digital efforts.

Besides, with all due respect who's died and made Google the police on marketing and guest blogging? Sure I get it, we have to adhere to best standard practice, but once again, saying guest blogging is dead doesn't benefit anyone that's legitimately working hard on their campaigns.

Seems Google, is once again winning especially given you want/promote authors to connect their Google+. Some clients are dominating the SERP's due to diligence, hard work, building their community via great content, and promoting themselves *the way their clients* and readers can find them. Putting out this type of article is just more unnecessary hyperbole.

**Noz Urbina**

January 20, 2014 at 2:49 pm

This is going to come out worse than I mean it, but unless i missed something massive (quire possible) then there is a big issue here.

It may seem an obvious thing to ask, but how does Google know a guest post from a non-guest post? Many blogs today are collaborative that may involve several bloggers chiming in. Some more regularly than others. Are new ones "guests" until the by-line shows up some more?

Where is the metadata that tells Google "this is a one time thing! Not a member of the usual blogging team!"

If this is being done by algorithm, then there must be a programatic way to identify a guest post with some level of reliability. If it's by human review then good content should prevail.

Many great blogs aren't owned really by any one blogger but a head of editorial. If these are somehow protected I think this article needs to explain far more concretely how those blogs are ok and guest posts by great contributors are not.

Your most founded advice seems to be the same as in the video: don't let junk into your content set. That's not really a big leap to take.

If anyone has accepted pay for articles planted on their sites I NEED to discuss the fortune that I administer for the Sultan of Cabo Verde. It's waiting in a Swiss bank account and there is an opportunity here for easy money that you won't want to miss!

- Noz

**Jonathan Jones**

January 20, 2014 at 2:49 pm

Interesting. I think the main problem with this is determining a bad guest post (i.e. one that is intended to only increase rankings) to good guest posts (i.e. a person sharing knowledge that fits his/her area of expertise). It's going to be difficult differentiating the two, if the implementation of these guest posts is done with this in mind.

**Andy Hollandbeck**

January 20, 2014 at 2:59 pm

The real problem, for Google, is that so many blog owners will post crappy guest posts — especially if they can make money from them — and Google is left to sort out the wheat from the chaff in search. Conscientious bloggers will continue to look for quality, opportunists will take whatever helps them.

**Lars Skjoldby**

January 20, 2014 at 2:49 pm

So what you are saying is that sites like moz.com and searchengineland.com should begin to use nofollow for all their authors? Except for internal staff of course.

**Debjit Saha**

January 20, 2014 at 2:53 pm

@Matt, What I can get from this is Guest Blogging is still allowed but abusing the practice of Guest Blogging for link marketing wont be tolerated by google anymore. Is this correct?

**dev**

January 20, 2014 at 11:15 pm

technically directory submission, blog commenting are still okay too .. until you start offering them as urs SEO service 😊

**Brandon Lewin**

January 20, 2014 at 2:53 pm

Guest blogging is not dead. You just have to be more careful who you guest blog for. However, if you have partnership with a company or multiple companies, the guest blogs will not hurt. Macro-blogs do this all the time with contributors.

How is it dead? Your point is fairly weak. Guest blogging is like link sharing a year and half ago. You can't and never should have just solicited exchanging links, however people and companies did. It didn't make it right. Google punished any negative links. As they should. On the other side, the companies who had reputable and positive links, actually helped their SEO and traffic.

**linkaudit**

January 20, 2014 at 2:53 pm

WOW I posted today an article on our blog predicting that Google would take this approach with Guest Blogs along with many other predictions:

<http://linkaudit.co.uk/blog/predicting-the-beast/>

Enjoy

**Brand X**

January 20, 2014 at 2:54 pm

So, the only real method for obtaining links on a large scale is to:

1. Be a brand by spending millions/billions of dollars on funny commercials and PR.
2. As a result, most people will link to you because they know your name, not because your content is great, interesting, nor valuable in any way. In fact, you may be a major rip-off to consumers, and are simply on the map because you sell a product. Boy, it's great to be wealthy in this country, then Google can promote you.

Even RapGenius is an effect of money/brand protection.

Change and innovation is hampered by when existing power structures are simply mirrored.

Perhaps you should look at how some "spammy sites" add real unique value in the marketplace, and allow those to rank; not to mention, I know some spammy sites that have evolved a lot since they first ranked, showing a commitment to ever-improving customer focus.

Some verticals dont even show a single micro-brand, because your algos are too limiting to mega-brands, regardless of customer value.

**Shona**

January 20, 2014 at 2:54 pm

It's a shame they had to spoil a good thing. About 6 months ago I was contact via the contact form on my page by a lady who was offering to produce a guest post on my blog. Initially, I was flattered. She assured me it would be free, the topic would be relevant, and I could get up to 5 posts a month if I liked (which is way too much in my case). I accepted and published the first blog. However I was really not impressed with the tone of the piece and the quality of the writing. While the topic was in line with what I discuss on my blog, the voice was completely out of place. I declined anymore content, and was practically spammed for a while....asking over and over when could I publish more and that they had "a ton" more blog posts waiting for me.

I'm sure they did!

So yeah, I can completely support the idea that you need to be selective when accepting guest posts.

**Gabriella Sannino**

January 20, 2014 at 2:54 pm

While I agree with a few comments in here, I'm really ~~puzzled~~ not surprised about this article. At the end of the day Matt, as a content developer/marketer I welcome and promote relevant content whether on my site or what my clients and I deem supportive of their digital efforts. Besides, who has died and made Google the police on marketing or guest blogging?

Sure I get it... we have to adhere to best standard practice, but once again, this benefits

Google especially given you want/promote authors to connect their Google+. Sure I know you are trying to make search a better experience but, let me let you in on a secret you and your "kill ALL SEO's" mentality should understand: Clients are dominating the SERP's due to diligence, working hard on building their community by creating awesome content and promoting themselves *the way their clients* and readers can find them. As part of an amazing SEO community that's what we do.

Sorry but I gotta tell you Matt, this sort of article is just another reason why I can never take Google seriously, you guys seem to love dropping hints that are more hyperbole than valuable information.



**Mike**

January 20, 2014 at 2:59 pm

There are just too many variables I don't like by saying all Guest Blogging is dead. What counts as guest blogging as opposed to say Freelance Writing for a newspaper's blog? Where does a line get drawn? If someone has their own blog they write for but occasionally write for the New York Times blog does NYT get penalized for that guest blog? What if they're a tech editor of a newspaper's blog which they write for most of the time but they do a guest post on Kotaku? That seems like a reasonable guest post. Can no one ever have a post on someone else's site ever again for fear of it seeming like a bad guest post? Will you only be seen as not a spammy guest blogger if you include every place you've ever written a post to in your G+ "contributes to" section in order to be cross-referenced for validity?



**James Davis**

January 20, 2014 at 2:59 pm

Hello Matt,

We are a health and fitness community which has always allowed our members to submit guest articles and blogs for editorial review. We have always steered clear of spammy articles, not allowed optimised keyword links and made sure we used the correct Google+ Authorship.

I am worried now my website will be penalised for this activity ??

Are you saying "ALL" Guest blogging is bad or can high quality publishers still carry on if we make sure the posts are high quality and relevant ??

Kind Regards

James

The Fitness Blogger Network



**Chris Hornak**

January 20, 2014 at 3:03 pm

In recent light of all the changes that have happened to the Google algorithm over the past two years. I think many internet marketing agencies have started looking at doing strategies that drive traffic and guest posting can be one of those strategies. If I work with a relevant blog, like moz or search engine land and provide them with content they find valuable for their audience and link to something on our site to extend the story then that is a viable marketing strategy... even without considering it's impact on Google's search results. The fact that someone could be punished for forming a strong business partnership seems drastic.

Of course there are probably more spammers than agencies like these but there will always be people looking to make a quick buck. I see people buying into SEO strategies that were outdated 10 years ago.

**Hania Sudymont Whitfield**

January 20, 2014 at 3:05 pm

I get requests to have others guest blog on my blog and I always refuse. First, I am not seeking content for the sake of content, and 2nd, there goes the whole concept of it being MY blog.

Yes, I have had guest bloggers, but of those whom I asked to do so because they brought specific value or were topical.

I really am tired of content for the sake of fresh content. Google had the right intentions when it changed its algorithms to seek fresh content rather than just keywords. But, as usual, whatever they seek is bastardized.

Here's hoping that eventually the readers will help weed out the junk by ceasing to follow those blogs who are technically spamming us online just to raise and maintain rankings.

**Nick Marr**

January 20, 2014 at 3:10 pm

This was bound to happen but don't we risk Google penalties when you have genuine articles that provide useful links out to relevant websites. My fear is that good people will get caught in this war against spam.

**Vivek**

January 20, 2014 at 3:11 pm

Can anybody give an advice on how one can gain quality backlinks? Because competition is so high that to rank on any damn keyword it may take years without link building.

**Ivan juras**

January 20, 2014 at 3:19 pm

Well, thanks for having the courage to say that. The problem with many "white hat" practitioners is that they don't know they're actually doing "black hat" in Google's eyes.

**William Kennedy**

January 20, 2014 at 3:22 pm

It's good to see Google taking a definite position on worst practices but I sometimes worry that quality sites get docked points for not being spammy enough. For instance, my company wants to increase their ranking but do not want to get banned. We rank number 6 for our term but the ones ahead of us are terrible.

We are a web design firm. That means clients are wasting money with the wrong people and months later they discover us and we have to clean up the mess left behind by the spammy sites.

Still it's a tough job deciding what ranks and I would not like to be one who calling shots.

**Charles Montgomery**

January 20, 2014 at 3:22 pm

Hummingbird, Panda, Penguin and all the other algo updates you guys are rolling out proves an interesting point: Google needs quality sites in the organic side of the SERPS in order to drive revenue for the paid side.

Here's where you miss the boat Cutt's. It's us SEO who play by the quality standards that create the positive content and UX on client sites so that you guys have something to rank

with your algorithms. You think your algo's work on there own? Nope. Its the SEOs who give your algo's something to hold onto.

The truth is WE make Google work. If all legit SEO's quit, you would be left with only spammer SEOs. Algos or not, Google would have an uphill battle. How about you stop punishing an entire industry over one email. Also, you are welcome for the great sites that give google its return visitors and brand penetration in the search market.

**Ryan Jones**

January 20, 2014 at 3:23 pm

You totally should have done this as a guest post.....

**Melissa Fach**

January 20, 2014 at 3:33 pm

LMAO!

**Adam**

January 20, 2014 at 3:27 pm

About friggin' time someone said this. I love how people are overreacting as well...typical SEOs going nuts over nothing.

Read more closely, guys. Matt didn't say you couldn't do it or that you shouldn't do it...he said that you shouldn't do it **as a way to gain links**...in other words, as an "SEO" practice (which it really isn't). Do it if you want as a marketing practice, but don't expect Google to give you any benefit for it because there isn't any logical reason Google should; if you're doing it correctly, you'll get enough of a benefit from the site you volunteered to write guest content for in the first place and anything Google does in your favor is a bonus.

One question, though, Matt...have they started calling you yet or do they just email you? I get the odd call from those clowns and it's usually pretty funny when I bust them. "We are from Canada." "Really? Which part?" "North Canada." As a South Canadian, I had to reject the person as I wasn't in his geographic area.

**Danne**

January 20, 2014 at 3:34 pm

Well, who links to a site anyways these days? Aren't all links more or less paid for? Who would link to a loan site? All those links are spam.

**Ted**

January 20, 2014 at 3:44 pm

This shows that there is definitely a great deal of frustration on Google's end with how to deal with guest blogging and the links generated from it. In turn, this also tells us that its working really well as a tactic to increase rankings at the moment.

I see that everyone is making a valid point with regards to not penalizing everyone because a few bad apples as spoiling things by being spammy with guest blogging. But I'm pretty sure that Google's response will be the same as it was when it came to penalizing text link ads. Go ahead and guest blog still, just make sure that the links are nofollowed. Because if you are just there to guest blog in order to get in front of a new audience then the links don't need to be followed in order for that to happen.

**Andrea**

January 20, 2014 at 3:44 pm

This will never end. Today is guest posting, tomorrow will be another one, and so on. Too much money involved.



**Tim**

January 20, 2014 at 3:44 pm

Hello Matt,

This are great news indeed. I dont know if our investigation exposing guest posting agencies bribing bloggers to post articles for their customers had any contribution to this decision but if it did I'm glad our work was appreciated.

<https://searchengineleaks.wordpress.com/2014/01/07/guestpostshop-bribing-bloggers-investigation/>

I totally support the idea that guest posting should be about knowing the guest poster in person and he should be a really authority in the nice looking to reach a new audience. Lately most of the guest posting became low quality article marketing without bringing anything valuable for visitors being done only for backlinks sake.



**Matt Cutts**

January 20, 2014 at 3:57 pm

Tim, it's exactly stuff like this that made me want to give people a heads up to avoid spammy guest blogs.



**Tim**

January 20, 2014 at 4:47 pm

Thanks Matt.

When webmasters will understand that backlinks have to be gained and not built the web will be a great place.



**Tim**

January 23, 2014 at 10:50 am

I think you'd want to see this:

<https://searchengineleaks.wordpress.com/2014/01/23/high-pr-blog-network-used-by-guestpostshop-discovered/>

They have to be really desperate to get backlinks if they guest post to an artificial high pr blog network with almost 0 real audience. Is like talking to the hand.



**Dr. Michael Haley**

January 23, 2014 at 11:01 am

Kudos, Tim. Loved it.



**Matt Cutts**

January 29, 2014 at 11:31 pm

Yup, the team saw that post as well as

<http://searchengineleaks.wordpress.com/2014/01/23/guestpostshop-try-to-cover-their-tracks/> 😊

**James Davis**

January 20, 2014 at 4:27 pm

This is a very informative and shocking read!!

**Danny Sullivan**

January 20, 2014 at 10:25 pm

Hey Tim, FYI it's fairly ironic you're asking if your investigation helped get a post about bad guest blogging when "Google's Jaw-Dropping Sponsored Post Campaign For Chrome" on the home page of your site leads to a copy of my article from Search Engine land that is reprinted without permission. A guest contribution you didn't vet or what?

**Curtis Noble**

January 23, 2014 at 10:51 am

Busted!! haha. I don't really think Google can/will be effective at killing this tactic. There are SO many ways right now to get around a post "looking" like a guest post. I think the only type of guest blogging that Google can get rid of are those which might be a post about marketing which end w/ an author byline that says something like:

this post contributed by Ryan Randolph, professional author and blogger with a passion for divorce attorney Santa Barbara.

So, stop doing that. Problem solved for SEO's and link builders.

**Chris Monty**

January 20, 2014 at 3:45 pm

Boom – these goes guest blogging. Thankfully, we never did this, but you could see the writing on the wall...it's getting abused more and more.

@Vivek, have you tried blog commenting (hint, you just did). You might also look into obtaining quality links from respected web directories like DMOZ, the Yahoo Directory and Best of the Web.

**Steve Faber**

January 20, 2014 at 3:46 pm

Matt,

It's a shame that Google is taking such a hard line stance against something that can deliver such value to audiences. When requesting to guest post on a blog, I could honestly give a rat's pitoote whether or not Google even notices; really. I am doing it to expand my and my organization's reach, build relationships, and expose my writing to a broader audience.

It has been very important for branding growth and yes, my writing career. I've had featured posts on blogs such as Hive Health Media, Search Marketing Standard, Matt About Business, HomeToys, and many others in the last decade. There are all highly respected publications, and the posting was a win-win. They got a new perspective and excellent information for their readers, and I exposed my writing and brand to a new audience. Whether Google (or Yahoo, Bing, or whateversearch.com) used it their algorithm was purely secondary, and could be done away with altogether.

Penalizing legitimate content creating and distribution relationships is simply unconscionable, however. Deliver no benefit, but at the same time, levy no penalty. If you're of the opinion that certain sites pollute the Internet, by all means de-index them, just have the decency to fact check first.

My .02c,  
Steve Faber

**Michael Merritt**

January 20, 2014 at 3:46 pm

Hi Matt,

The email you shared is by no means exactly attractive to a publisher. It looks very much like it was written by an Excel mail merge and it's using the old and tired plea of "please let me have links." I also have no doubt that a resulting post would be low-quality.

However, I believe you misinterpreted the first bolded statement. I've seen many of these kinds of emails before and the author of this email doesn't seem to be offering money but the post itself as a contribution to your site. I blame shoddy English for making the sentence seem to indicate that the person is offering payment.

On a related note, I don't think guest posting is completely dead. As long as people are using it to share their expertise and authoritative knowledge of a topic, then it's still a great way to build authority for your personal and/or company brand. It's just that a link should not be the goal of guest posting.

**Sonia Simone**

January 20, 2014 at 4:56 pm

I agree, I don't see any mention of money, I'm pretty sure the "contribution" was their not-too-awesome writing.

**Durant Imboden**

January 20, 2014 at 3:50 pm

Today guest blogging, tomorrow "content marketing"?

Maybe we'll eventually return to a world where "fluff" means marshmallow creme instead of link- or SEO-driven blog posts.

**Burt**

January 20, 2014 at 3:59 pm

Maybe I am missing the point, but from what I gather you can guest blog all you want or accept high quality guest articles just use rel="NOFOLLOW" on all links - just like on PR releases.

You still get referral traffic and recognition just no PageRank flow.

**Fiona Pullen**

January 21, 2014 at 4:12 am

That's how I interpret it too which makes me wonder why so many people are panicking. If you are guest posting because you want to reach a new audience and make them aware of you and your brand then it doesn't matter if the link is no follow. If your content is good and people are interested in what you do they will come and visit your site.

If you are guest posting because you are just trying to generate a back link to your site then yes this post would panic you because it is a sign your tactics may stop working soon.

**Zozi**

January 20, 2014 at 4:07 pm

Dear Matt!

Are you (and Google) sure about that this is the way of future?  
This article seems to be Google's (and (maybe) your) imaginations about (SEO's) future...

Don't you think that SEO is a business based on your service? After reading this I realized SEO has become a business which is led, controlled and governed by you...  
Few years ago we were following your developments and ideas but by now we have to run after your studies and/or follow your thoughts about what is (good) SEO (or not).  
Few years ago you were trying to provide a service based on webmaster's and professionals's ability and/or talent – but nowadays I can not be a professional if I don't know what Google expects from (me as) a professional and/or "talent" ...

Thx,  
Z



**Shawn**

January 20, 2014 at 4:13 pm

On my site, I actually have a link asking for contributors but I make it clear that I am not looking for guest bloggers, only people who want to join my site as regular writers. Despite that, I still get a ton of requests for guest bloggers and even some that look like the email you posted in this article. I have just started ignoring them now. It's clear all that they want is to use my site for a backlink to theirs.



**M. Edward Borasky (@znmeb)**

January 20, 2014 at 4:14 pm

"if you're using guest blogging as a way to gain links in 2014, you should probably stop"

Matt, I gave up on Google as a marketing channel years ago. "Organic" search optimization is a game only big companies like Amazon and black hats can win at, and paid search is too expensive and vulnerable to ad blockers, click fraud and other nonsense. My time is too valuable to play the Google games.



**Christopher County**

January 20, 2014 at 4:18 pm

Hey Matt,

I'm getting really tired of this. I did a search "New Year's Eve 2013", no quotes, and got this as my first result: [https://www.google.com/search?safe=off&site=&source=hp&q=new+year%27s+eve+2013&oq=new+year+eve&gs\\_l=hp.3.0.35i39j0l9.1206.6986.0.8275.18.12.6.0.0.12:1c.1.32.hp..2.16.833.DAhDGBHuMiM](https://www.google.com/search?safe=off&site=&source=hp&q=new+year%27s+eve+2013&oq=new+year+eve&gs_l=hp.3.0.35i39j0l9.1206.6986.0.8275.18.12.6.0.0.12:1c.1.32.hp..2.16.833.DAhDGBHuMiM).

The first result is Mashable.com's post about Google's dancing doodle. Really? Because everyone and their mother didn't go to Google and see that thing already.

You're going after guest blogging as a whole instead of pinpointing the spammers, yet your results put crap like this at the top? That result still ranks number one today. That site and other sites like it basically republish content from other sites who HAVE LESS LINKS. But watch out, sites like Mashable.com link out to these no-names. Better institute a nofollow policy on that, brother. I thought this was a violation of some stupid rule. But wait, it's not exactly the same, so that makes it OK. Meanwhile unique content that adds value is going to be put into the same bucket as pure spam? Why, because we know that links drive rankings? You're killing me, Smalls.

Anywho, Google dominates search so we either need to bow down to your rules, change careers or find a way to make other search engines compete. But don't worry. The way people search is changing. And Google.com is not a part of that equation.

And I owe you a beer.

Chris



**Christopher Countey**

January 20, 2014 at 6:36 pm

Hey Matt,

Thanks for adding that last section. That really clarifies things. Feel free to trash my other comment. I'm still pissed about the Mashable thing, though. 😊

Chris



**chris**

January 20, 2014 at 7:43 pm

google is already minted so who cares how people search, they don't.

anyway my outlook is this, believe in what you believe and stick with it, chances are that in googles ongoing attempts to subvert spammers (web masters) they will eventually come full circle and what once was will be again.

Present day capabilities in search are like cavemen with flint tools, until someone discovers how to actually do search based on what a person actually wants to find then it will be war lord (google) against the oppressed (spammers)



**Mhairi**

January 20, 2014 at 4:19 pm

Targeting guest blog spammers will help clean things up in the short term but the resulting effect will just mean that they move on to the next thing they think they can exploit. From the number of fake social accounts I see popping up sharing drive I think that is where they are headed.

I don't think you have to throw the baby out with the bath water, if your blog posts are genuine, infrequent and valuable and are from a partner or someone you have a close business relationship then you should still post them in the spirit of authenticity.



**Emma**

January 20, 2014 at 4:37 pm

Having just sorted out a website that was penalised due to historical ( very poor) agency work I completely welcome this. not only does it make SERPS better at what they are meant to be there for..answering queries but also protects clients from poor advice and online management. The amount of web masters I had to contact to get links removed, who then proceeded to charge me for it was really shocking. As an online marketer I am all for being able to get my website to rank, but I always keep in mind that it's one thing to get people to visit the site and another task to keep them there. It makes no sense to me not to make a site future proof and of quality and use to our customers. It been on the cards for a while if you have been paying attention so we can't really be too shocked. Also it's just a hard line on spammy, link driven guest posting. I will happily keep having guest posters on my blog if they are relevant, informative and advise our readers, basically 500 hundred words and a link does not good content make!



**Adam**

January 20, 2014 at 4:38 pm

Hey Matt,

Semi-related thought: have you ever thought about putting Disqus or IntenseDebate in as a comment system? It would be nice to vote up some of the more intelligent comments that come about as a result of your posts, especially the SEO ones.

**Tammy Emineth**

January 20, 2014 at 4:44 pm

I absolutely have been telling my clients for years never to accept random guest post especially from unknown sources but those that build a connection such as the real estate agents I help love exchanging great tips, real estate information and client benefits in the form of guest blogging. If someone just can't get a blog up this month or that and has a networking site with great, high quality information that wants to post their next blog on the other site, go for it. More quality content and better results for both players... all done legitimately. But yes, those ridiculous, spammy ones are garbage. So... how will Google distinguish??

**Jim Munro**

January 20, 2014 at 4:45 pm

You don't have to publish this but I think it's time to move on, mate.

You've done a great job over an extended period, a phenomenal job, but for the good of the internet, I think you should consider stepping aside to allow some fresh ideas to come forward.

**Sef**

January 20, 2014 at 4:49 pm

This isn't a surprise at all. I believe guest blogging was the alternative to article submission. Don't get it wrong. Mainly, the majority of people doing guest blogging is to actually get inbound links to their sites using their target keywords which is definitely manipulative at all terms. But this does not mean that guest blogging will be decayed at all. I mean, the main thing here is to avoid using keyword rich, irrelevant topics, low quality domains, different domain extension, nofollowed links etc. Then you should be fine.

**Daniel Imbellino**

January 20, 2014 at 4:50 pm

Right on Matt, and Google! I'm so tired of hearing people in our social media community on Google+ (Strategic Social Networking) publishing posts telling others to guest blog all over the place. It just dilutes quality content, and gives rank to sites, content, and authors who otherwise don't deserve it anyway. Someone shared a post with me this morning that raved about how wonderful guest blogging is, I couldn't disagree more.

I never did a single guest post, and my site ranks perfectly fine! It appears Google is in fact putting more importance on the quality of content, a big win for both internet users and those like me who work really hard to produce their content on the web.

**Andy vega**

January 20, 2014 at 4:53 pm

For those of you that are nitpicking Matt's post, you know hat you are just trying to be argumentative. Most of us have received similar emails and we all know what it means. An article for links. It is not an article because they want to contribute to the site because they have something of importance to add, but it is an article for links. It is just that. The fact of the matter is that Matt is exactly right, it has gotten very spammy and it was only a matter of time before Google would take action. If you were Google and your goal was to provide the most relevant information you could, than you would also take some steps to curb this practice!

**Kathleen Garber**

January 20, 2014 at 5:04 pm

I've known for a while that those emails are spammy but what confuses me and many other

bloggers are what about those emails that are asking for dofollow but don't offer to pay. I would never do them because they just want advertising and I charge for advertising (and they are always nofollow). Or when I do have a guest post by a trusted blogging friend who I would vouch for, they are dofollow but they didn't pay. If it's not paying for dofollow links, is it still frowned upon?

**S C**

January 20, 2014 at 5:04 pm

Article banks of junky spammy content pre-dates the internet and even the word "spam." Can you really imagine a legitimate publisher being taken in by these people? Who posts content without looking at it on a blog they care about?

**Jakk Ogden**

January 20, 2014 at 5:12 pm

Another reason to not allow guest posts:

Follow up e-mail as a result of articles like this.

I used to accept guest posts on a select few on my blog's, however stopped after around 8 months. Why? Because of the amount of SEO firms getting back to me months later request I change their anchor text, remove their links, change the publishing date, etc.

It becomes too much work.

**Glenn**

January 20, 2014 at 5:13 pm

I've never blogged to get links it's always been just a by-product of commenting on a subject, like here.

I've noticed over time that people who try to beat the system eventually get caught in their own web of deception.

I learned over 10 years ago that deception in SEO is just as bad as deception in any form of business life.

It's just not worth it and in the end just run your site and leave it at that.

**Rish**

January 20, 2014 at 5:14 pm

This is great news for quality SEOs and Copywriters. I expect that post-Hummingbird, links in general will lose value in influencing the SERPs. Hummingbird, which marks the rise of semantic relevance, rewards sites with truly rich content – deep, in-depth content, videos, etc. The prevailing thought has always been: more links = more authority = higher rankings. However, it's far easier to create/buy spammy links (via tactics like guest blogging) than it is to constantly produce great, fresh content that helps users. Which strategy should be rewarded moving forward?

If Search Engines have gotten sophisticated enough to truly recognize high-quality content, links should have a more limited influence in the SERPs now than in the past. A few NATURAL links from quality editorial-type sites may be helpful, I would think, but they have to be genuinely earned. Build quality sites, not back links. I'm glad Google has gone this direction.

**Mike Gracia**

January 20, 2014 at 5:18 pm

I've mixed feelings on this one...

I understand the need to make these kinds of statements – there's a hell of a lot of crap guest posts out there these days, and something does need to be done about that

Matt, whilst you have clarified the post a little (appreciated!) there is still considerable confused and contradiction...

On the one hand you're saying that there are valid reasons for guest posting, are still high quality sites out there, along with good guest authors, but on the other hand you say;

"I'd expect Google's webspam team to take a pretty dim view of guest blogging going forward."

Surely you can see that this causes MORE than just a little bit of a mixed message?

Regarding talking about SEO specifically, it sounds like in your clarification you're saying that guest posting is fine (for brand, traffic etc - which I 100% agree with), but that it shouldn't help with SEO at all...

Does this in fact mean that, as far as SEO goes, you feel being featured as a guest on leading industry magazines should not carry ANY weight, regardless of the quality of the site, post and guest author?

Some further clarification would, I'm sure, help people to understand...

Mike

Ps. Personally for the kind of sites I'm meaning, I'd still publish on them anyway and have a nofollow - I post mainly for reasons other than SEO! But even so, should an article on Moz.com, SEL or .Net REALLY have to be nofollowed?!



**Rish**

January 20, 2014 at 5:18 pm

This is great news for quality SEOs and Copywriters. I expect that post-Hummingbird, links in general will lose value in influencing the SERPs. Hummingbird, which marks the rise of semantic relevance, rewards sites with truly rich content - deep, in-depth content, videos, etc. The prevailing thought has always been: more links = more authority = higher rankings. However, it's far easier to create/buy spammy links (via tactics like guest blogging) than it is to constantly produce great, fresh content that helps users. Which strategy should be rewarded moving forward?

If Search Engines have gotten sophisticated enough to truly recognize high-quality content, links should have a more limited influence in the SERPs now than in the past. A few NATURAL links from quality editorial-type sites may be helpful, I would think, but they have to be genuinely earned. Build quality sites, not back links. I'm glad Google has decided to go in this direction.



**Cliff Smith**

January 20, 2014 at 8:19 pm

Yes! I am with you on this! Why reward link building if you don't want it to occur?



**Fionn Downhill**

January 20, 2014 at 5:18 pm

Oh My goodness stop the drama. Accept as many guest blog posts as you want, write as many as you want just make sure the no follow is being used. Tell the spammers you are happy to accept their "high quality" article but to note that all links on your blog as now followed. Chances are you wont be hearing back from them. Send out as many articles as you like as long as you check that the link is no followed and nothing will happen to you. I know somebody charging \$800 to their clients when one of these guest posts is accepted its time it was addressed.



**Elmarie Porthouse**

January 20, 2014 at 5:19 pm

Thank you for the warning. Everywhere you read, people are saying that you should accept guest posts on your blog to help increase readership, help with adding content and build backlinks. I was considering opening my blog to guest authors but now I'm really thinking twice.

I'm a regular guest author on another reputable blog. I don't build any links to any of my own sites into my posts for this blog. The only link to me and my social media profiles is in my author's profile. Will this eventually be considered too spammy?

**Joshua**

January 20, 2014 at 7:20 pm

Only Google knows what is in the heart of Google, but I believe the problem has originated from the open solicitation for guest posts by site owners. Therefore, I recommend staying away from sites that openly advertise Guest post here or write for us. If a site is soliciting for guest posts publicly, then it is my guess that this solicitation will be seen by Google as a low quality trust factor and analogous to what used to be a common practice, which was soliciting other sites to link to you publicly from your own website. A true guest post starts with a relationship and it should originate by an invitation from the procuring site, but this now has to be done in private and not in the open.

**Elmarie Porthouse**

January 22, 2014 at 3:53 pm

Thank you for your reply, Joshua. Yeah! I was asked specifically to write a weekly guest post for this blog. Currently, I'm the only other author on the blog other than the owner. However, he is looking for one more guest blogger in Australia and two in the UK. So I guess I'll be safe.

**Fionn Downhill**

January 20, 2014 at 5:21 pm

Easy, use no follow on your blog then accept any posts you want. Ensure when you have a guest post accepted that the site that hosts your content has a no follow. Simple why the need for clarification sounds pretty straight forward to me.

**Mike Gracia**

January 20, 2014 at 5:32 pm

Despite my concerns, I do understand why this needed to be said – There's been WAYYY too much 'guest spam' out there in the last couple of years.

**wal**

January 20, 2014 at 5:38 pm

Hi Matt,

honestly your warning made me skeptical on several points. the first one, is your way to see guest blogging... the nice guest blogging (with nofollow links) and the bad guest blogging (with dofollow link).

Do the external link rel attribute indicate the quality of a post ?

probably your warning isn't about quality, but just about all these that are trying to manipulate search results (even if they publish really interesting content). but may I ask you what do you believe is better... a no taste guest article that fully respect Google guidelines using nofollow?... or a great guest post that drive traffic and dealing with search engine as well ?

**Christian Geng**



January 20, 2014 at 5:48 pm

Dear Matt,

I run a newspaper which is also internet based. Naturally I have many guest authors on my page which are journalists (I pay them to write for me). I also write a lot of quality guest comments on blogs where I wanted to see our opinion and newspaper-brand in order people know that the article comes from our editor team. In the post articles and comments I put no links but I do it in the comment-profil (my private name and url of my newspaper, like I did the same way here). I use Google authorship for guest authors and for my own comments on blog, too.

My I have follow question please:

- 1.) Is is ok if I use google authorship for my journalists and link to company or institution they come from or they work for (dofollow)?
- 2.) Is there a risk to overuse my google rel-authorship tag when I am a guest? I use it in all my posts, articles and comments. Do you see a link to my google+ profile as spammy link sometimes?
- 3.) Can I get a penalty to my google+ account when I use the google authorship to much or if it is linked to much?
- 4.) Do you recognise me as an author when I write at the end of a blog comment or a blog post google.de/+ChrinxianGexg without the www. in front? And does this make sense?

May idea is to build a strong google+ authorship brand without getting penalized.

Thanks you very much for answering me.

Christian Geng, Germany



**Andrew J. Coate**

January 20, 2014 at 5:51 pm

I didn't read each and every comment in this thread, so apologies if this convo already got kicked off. Your point is taken here, but as a few readers have commented – it's a bit broad. Yes, the practice of guest blogging has gotten a bit spammy. Sure. Everything on them interwebs seems to go there at some point, especially when it relates to sales or marketing practitioners. But not everyone has spammy guest posters.

What are some examples of folks/companies doing it right?



**Chris J Everett**

January 20, 2014 at 5:53 pm

I completely agree with getting rid of the guest blogging spam. 90% of it is garbage content with no more than general colloquial value and no real insight.

But I don't think it's necessarily "fair" to include companies who do provide value to consumers in the information they're putting out there in their content – those who are marketing themselves righteously. Surely the algorithm in all of it's "glory" can identify a worthwhile piece of content (one that's socially shared and is published on a contextually relevant and valuable website for users) even if it's in the form of a "guest blog post."



**Baruch Labunski**

January 20, 2014 at 6:03 pm

Hi Matt,

I would not call it Guest spamming, its Guest Jacking :), it's needs to stop. Maybe Matt you should create a very aggressive video on how much action Google would talk on this. Let business owners know it's not acceptable. Just like you the Press Release Marketing Strategy.

PS. Love your blog posts I even read the way back posts form 2008, Just for fun :).

Cheers,

Baruch!

**Mark Friend**

January 20, 2014 at 6:03 pm

Why don't you just discount the links which are spammy instead of penalizing real businesses who may have been using this strategy for the past couple of years? Hardly seems fair you penalize companies for utilizing what was thought to be a white hat strategy just a short while ago. Go ahead and penalize those crappy guest blog sites where it's obvious they'll post anything, fine with me. Penalize the spammers, don't blow up the whole damn thing. You're bringing a bomb to a fist-fight. Some of us worked hard to get great content published on reputable blogs.

Now we can waste our time contacting webmasters to nofollow links which have been published or use the disavow tool and wonder if the site will ever come back instead of using their time to help build their business. How about some transparency from the most profitable company in the world? Let us know what we can do. And don't tell me write good content, it's obvious links are more important or you wouldn't be writing this blog post.

Good work Matt!

**Baruch Labunski**

January 20, 2014 at 6:05 pm

Hi Matt,

I would not call it Guest spamming, its Guest Jacking :), it's needs to stop. Maybe Matt you should create a very aggressive video on how much action Google would take on this. Let business owners know it's not acceptable. Just like the Press Release Marketing Strategy.

PS. Love your blog posts I even read the way back posts form 2008, Just for fun :).

**David Melamed**

January 20, 2014 at 6:05 pm

Matt,

You seem to be warning webmasters about accepting guest posts. Are you saying that sites can be penalized for "selling links" if guest posts on their site have outbound do follow links?

Are you also implying that a guest poster who includes a do follow link, even one that is editorial, but is on a site that seems to have other guest posts that have shadier links will be penalized for buying links, even though they aren't?

I understand there will be collateral damage, but i see this as a net negative for the quality of the search index... and will likely make outbound links by default no follow, and any do follow link to be assumed to be spam.

**Karen Foreman-Brown**

January 20, 2014 at 6:06 pm

As someone who has worked in SEO and digital marketing for genuine (non-spam) clients for the last five years, I do find the actions that Google takes to deal with spammers a little laughable. Only because we all know there is only one reason that spam sites exist in the first place – to run AdSense advertising.

Surely the easy way to eliminate spammers would be to prevent them from running AdSense ads on their sites? Then Poof! No more spam sites?!

We might be left with some affiliate sites and a few other dribs and drabs, but at my guess, something like 80% of spam sites would simply shut down.

Of course this would kill an income stream for our friends at Google, but ...

**Areesh**

January 20, 2014 at 6:08 pm

I did Guest Blogging in passed but truly not for links Building Purpose, My Purpose was to let the people recognize me with my brand-name. Also the Anchor i mostly use for links wasn't keywords reached i mostly use my Domain name as a link. Also the Articles i offer them was 100% unique, Well written and Copyscape passed.

I have two Questions:

- 1)I want to know, Was that a Good Way of guest Blogging??
- 2)If no, How to find the Right blogs to post our quality content.

**David Paul Krug**

January 20, 2014 at 6:13 pm

Matt,

It's getting clearer all the time that Google is lacking in innovation and thus the constant hypocritical approach to your own algorithms and search quality. Instead of policing the web Google should innovate and make changes that make spammy webmasters irrelevant. But instead of doing this they continue to play smoke and mirrors.

Google is primarily and advertising company. Let's be real if these spammy tactics as you call them didn't work you wouldn't be saying that it's over. In reality it works and will continue to work because it's very hard to tell that a contextual link inside of relevant content is a in fact paid for. So as Google you need to push out an update saying something is "DEAD". In reality it's never been more alive. Especially for big brands like Expedia for example:

<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=6976818>

**Federico Einhorn**

January 20, 2014 at 6:31 pm

Now that you updated the post and the title, I find myself asking "why then writing this post?" Given all the previous warnings Google gave on this subject, it was already clear enough that guest blogging for the sole purpose of getting links (while publishing low quality content) was a NO-NO. At first this post seemed to condemn ALL guest blogging, then back to basics ("referring to seo guest blogging")...

**Joseph Lin**

January 20, 2014 at 6:38 pm

Good post, though I am still unclear how Google determines as a good quality guest blogging. Are you referring to the quality of sites that accept guest blogging, or guest blogging post? Or the quantity of guest blogging that one person has done?

**Nick**

January 20, 2014 at 6:47 pm

I'm just shell shocked by links at this point, I don't try to get any nor do I focus on anything but the content of my own now nearly a decade old site. I've done all I can to maintain a "clean" profile, even removing some sections of my site and keeping the number of pages to a bare minimum. I have tried adding things, such as dynamic pages with items my visitors regularly look for from places like ebay but those are gone as well. Links, I can't wait until they no longer matter at all.

I will now safely trash any request for a guest post, for or from me, which thankfully is what I did in general already.

**Alan Bleiweiss**

January 20, 2014 at 6:57 pm

Can't we just put a fork in the entire "link building" concept already? I've been shifting clients into thinking "brand building" and into "if you rip off-site SEO out of your mind entirely, what would a brand do to build it's identity, presence and authority?"

It would be good to get an official Google rep to start using a similar notion.

**Joshua**

January 20, 2014 at 7:16 pm

Only Google knows what is in the heart of Google, but I believe the problem has originated from the open solicitation for guest posts by site owners. Therefore, I recommend staying away from sites that openly advertise Guest post here or write for us. If a site is soliciting for guest posts publicly, then it is my guess that this solicitation will seen by Google as a low quality trust factor and analogous to what used to be a common practice, which was soliciting other sites to link to you publicly from your own website. A true guest post starts with a relationship and it should originate by an invitation from the procuring site, but this now has to be done in private and not in the open.

**chris**

January 20, 2014 at 7:25 pm

why would google even consider using backlinks to rate relevancy, in a sense using a format (backlinks) that is so easy to manipulate to gauge relevance is a fundamental flaw in googles search strategy and leaves the door open for some new Stanford grad to take over the world of search.

**John**

January 20, 2014 at 7:29 pm

Hi Matt,

It's a great work that if you and your web spam team can do anything about the guest blogging getting over used. I have a question, sometimes I received emails saying that they want to exchange links on article. But both of our sites are not blog, will this considered to be guest blogging? Should I exchange links? I do not exchange links yet, because I don't think it will help my business.

**Micheal Cloy**

January 20, 2014 at 7:33 pm

Well, thanks for having the courage to say that. The problem with many "white hat" practitioners is that they don't know they're actually doing "black hat" in Google's eyes.

regards  
Micheal Cloy

**Shahzeb**

January 20, 2014 at 7:46 pm

Hi,

Brilliant post Matt, Sharing my real experience as I went to an online marketing group meeting for the first time by Meetup (NZ) and i was amazed that the organizers of that meeting ( who work at pretty big companies ) offered to every one that "we will pay you \$160(some where around that) and create great content and only place a link or two, how wonderful free written content by professionals and getting money?" I was very amazed with so much confidence and with the type of experience they had, they were literally asking to spam the death of poor people who believe or trust them because of their high profile jobs and their years of experience 😞

**Lee Sinclair**

January 20, 2014 at 7:50 pm

I couldn't agree with you more. I no longer pay attention to guest bloggers and I imagine thousands of others feel the same way.

Everything turned a bit sour for me when I learned about the practices of Jon Morrow (who is quickly becoming known as Jon Moron) and how he deceives audiences with his so called blogging for money techniques. Let me assure you, the only one who gets money is him, as thousands of people fall for his crap.

Guest blogging is over and unless your name is John Grisham or Stephen King, nobody has any interest in what you have to say.

**Naveen**

January 20, 2014 at 7:56 pm

Basically guest blogging isn't for building links, it is to provide information to readers that what they're looking for and if we create a buzz through guest blogging, it's not consider as a spam.

I've a query that how you monitor whether the guest blog post is spam or not? and how to validate a guest post. I know we can validate it by its quality and the readers engagement, I mean apart from this, what all the metrics you use technically.

Thanks.

**lloyd perry**

January 20, 2014 at 8:06 pm

Hi Matt,

While I agree with Matt Sells above, my key takeaway here is going to be in your line 'vouch for someone personally or know them well'. This almost suggests to me Google Authorship is needed, but then ... you've downgraded that also.

There's a lot of guest post spam out there written by an unknown that sits just above the eHow's and article submission websites, so I can only guess and hope your Google bot overlords will work out what is crappy guest blog content and not unfairly penalise legitimate guest blog content.

Thin content, I guess, will get punished as ever.

**Cliff Smith**

January 20, 2014 at 8:17 pm

Duh! Obviously people are going to take whatever works with Google's search engine and amp it up to the highest possible return point until it doesn't work any longer. So, a practice that Google said "YES" to for years, is now suddenly "NO! Just like articles, Press Releases and external links that were so well liked by Google until Penguin, Panda, and manual actions came along. How about giving consumers the right search results based on quality and relativity of web sites and content, not how many links are pointing to that web site or content? You just keep setting yourself up for spammy content and then complaining when it happens.

**Jeff Goins**

January 20, 2014 at 8:18 pm

As always, relationship rules. Thanks for sharing this, Matt. I agree. Spamming your way to the top was never a great strategy.

**David Paul Krug**

January 20, 2014 at 10:55 pm

And yet I've unsubscribed from all your lists that you still spam into my daily inbox with your autoresponders with your sales offers.

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**Stuart Walker**

January 20, 2014 at 8:46 pm

Hey Matt,

First time I've ever visited your blog let alone commented on it. Find this post quite odd. You're telling people to stop doing guest posting because some people abuse the method for links.

No matter what it is some people will abuse it. Doesn't mean everyone should stop doing it. Just do it properly and don't associate yourself with them.

Guest posting when done properly is a great way to build authority, expose yourself to new potential audiences that you want to target AND drive instant and targeted traffic to your site without worrying about SEO, why would I want to stop doing that?

The way Google ranks sites is based on links and having links from other authority blogs in the niche is surely a good thing whether that came from a guest post or not shouldn't be relevant.

If blog owners want to allow other people to post on their blogs then that's no ones business but their own.

Fair enough punish people who spam posts for link purposes to low quality sites that exist only for guest posting / links but don't punish genuine bloggers who allow good quality content on their site from other bloggers.

All the best,  
Stuart

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**David Paul Krug**

January 20, 2014 at 11:00 pm

Right it's like Matt meant to say: "Dear good people stop guest posting because the bad people are doing this too. Thus Google is confused and would like to ban all guest posting because said bad people are confusing us. And thus our technology is so archaic and can not tell the difference between the good and the bad thus we are going to penalize the good, the bad, and the ugly. "

Sincerely, Matt Cutts, Google's Web Spam Guru

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**Colin Henderson**

January 20, 2014 at 8:51 pm

Finally. I have a small inconsequential blog but on principle I never accept guest post requests. The reason is that blogs and affiliate sites are anathema to each other. Blogs are about authenticity, and affiliate sites are, well, not.

I'm not sure why someone as aware as Matt is writing this now in 2014. This is a 2006 story.

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**Avinash Kabra**

January 20, 2014 at 9:02 pm

I believe getting a no-follow backlink from a guest blogging will not harm SEO of website as it has nothing to do with PR. Can you please confirm whether am I right at my statement?

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**Madhav Tripathi**

January 20, 2014 at 9:07 pm

Guest blogging has become a business. I am seeing many bloggers publishing paid posts in the form of guest posts. I have received dozens of emails of the kind you have mentioned. Still I receive them.

**Cindy Brown**

January 20, 2014 at 9:14 pm

I am glad you took the time to clarify that guest blogging for SEO should be axed and not all guest blogging. I run my own blog and have learned over time to use a tightly woven sieve to filter those offensive requests out. Personally, however, I have guest posted for brand building, relationship building, networking, and expanding my following with quality interaction. Thankfully, I can be vouched for by the likes of Firepole Marketing, Be a Freelance Blogger, and RachelintheOC.

Don't stick a fork in me! I'm rare, certainly not done.

**Lovell D'souza**

January 20, 2014 at 9:31 pm

Hey Matt, you should enable Google+ comments on your blog.

**Juan Quaglia**

January 20, 2014 at 9:36 pm

Hi, Matt. Is there any alternative linkbuilding practice you would recommend?

**Patrick McCoy**

January 20, 2014 at 9:39 pm

Matt, thanks for the clarification with your added notes to the bottom of the post AND the title change. For me, this sounds like the right move. An SEO tactic starts out and then gets taken advantage of. There are just too many companies with too many people who can set up a "Guest Posting Services" website and crank out crap content to say to their clients, "We did our job!".

A big question will be, how will your team and Google's search algo be approaching this? Will it kick into gear from now on, or will you work to start targeting guest posts which are already and have been on the web for months or years? Thanks, Patrick

**Syed Muzammil**

January 20, 2014 at 9:43 pm

Always get nofollow links from the body on brand name anchor or non-commercial keyword, avoid commercial keywords in anchor text and remember to avoid links from author's bio and link must be relevant and you are done. always guest post on high authority sites in your industry those accept guest posts with full care like moz, sew, sej, in SEO industry.

**James Norquay**

January 20, 2014 at 9:45 pm

Matt,

I agree that some shady guest posting does need to stop, no one wants to read low quality spun guest blog content.

That been said their is also a large amount of folks doing great quality work and submitting articles that only make the web a better place.

It would be good to know more about the specifics of how Google plan to action this? I appreciate the warning yet more specifics are needed on how this will be targeted.

James.

**Afzal Zaheer**

January 20, 2014 at 9:53 pm

These days, every other blogger is after guest posting as people are using it for commercial gains.

It has undoubtedly compromised the aspect of quality content to a great extent as your post highlights that aspect clearly as well. Thanks

**Fahad Khanzai**

January 20, 2014 at 10:03 pm

Well Matt! The only thing is that guest blogging is still useful for SEO but if we don't follow Google guidelines not only in guest blogging but also in every feature of getting backlinks (either it is article submission or anything else) then surely it will harm our website. We are going for quality linking now. So if we create backlinks more and more natural then we will always be successful.

**David Schuller**

January 20, 2014 at 10:07 pm

Hi Matt.

On one hand, this disturbs me and on the other, I welcome it. It disturbs me because I am afraid that the smaller blogs who do produce good helpful content are going to be hurt more than the big guy spammers.

It really ticks me off when I read an article meant to explain how to do something. But instead, you read to the end and have gained nothing but a bunch of fluff.

Thanks

**Sian To**

January 20, 2014 at 10:10 pm

I have to say that I'm warmed by the fact that you receive such approaches by email too Matt!

**Atish Ranjan**

January 20, 2014 at 10:10 pm

Hey Matt,

Had a good read but I have some questions in mind. If see SEO it looks like we can only do On page stuffs in better way. If it comes to OFF page, We cannot do article submissions, cannot do directory submissions, even cannot do Guest blogging to gain some good dofollow backlinks then what we can do to gain Dofollow backlinks because its the factor for ranking a site well in Google SERPs.

So I want to know what are the ways of gaining quality dofollow backlinks for our site. Link earning is a good way, I know but how you define that I got a backlink just as reference on others blog is genuine(or I paid for the link).

May I have some clear view on this Please. Hoping for a positive reply from you Matt. 😊

P.S. I enjoy your webmaster videos, very clear and concise.

**Himanshu**

January 21, 2014 at 2:58 am

Valid Questions Atish, I would like to add some more questions.

1. How to get quality links other than writing great quality content.?
2. What advise would you give to guys who are just starting their internet marketing career.?

Since matt has drawn the curtains on guest blogging, most of the webmaster will not accept guest post now. Then how would the people land on website like moz or SEL and why are you not penalizing tons of seo software, made for just creating spammy links.

**Jagdish Bhatt**

January 20, 2014 at 10:13 pm

Matt,

Thank you to share this with us . Guest Post is a good technique to generate backlinks to a website, but bloggers are frequently making too many links which would be count as a spam. I would like to say that stop it and do some smart quality work for your website.

**What if BIG organizations ask you to write?**

January 20, 2014 at 10:22 pm

We've been asked to write posts and articles for organizations like Score and the SBA...

Here's a link:

<http://www.score.org/resources/what-difference-between-nonprofit-organization-and-benefit-corporation>

It's an honor to write for these type of places... Is this now risking a penalty of our company website?

I mean how can you tell the difference between a legit organization asking us to write helpful articles vs spammy guest posting????

**Geoff Jackson**

January 21, 2014 at 4:42 am

Authoritative domains with a real audience, real contributors, real following with valuable content is never going to be seen as low quality. You can spot low quality and spammy blogs a mile off, they just contain a never ending list of frequently churned out article spun nonsense in most case. No real people, no real content, no real pages. All blog posts will be bare minimum everything and contain one or two links per post with keywords as the anchor text.

**James Brockbank**

January 21, 2014 at 6:34 am

Drake, as far as I'm concerned...yes, you're risking a penalty. Not because of the fact that you're writing on such sites but that you use over-optimised anchor text such as "free, small business advice" to link back to your site. This, in itself, violates Google's quality guidelines!

**Drake**

January 21, 2014 at 10:23 am

That free advice stuff is Score itself linking to itself. That's all their site and internally linking back to itself. Scores entire mission is "Free small business advice" though... They have like 160 local offices where you get nothing but old business people giving free advice.

My concern was if we accept writing articles and posts for organizations like this, if we have a link back to ourselves as the author if it risks hurting our company site.

**Drake Forester**

January 20, 2014 at 10:23 pm

Sorry, didn't leave name on previous one.

**D Blogger**

January 20, 2014 at 10:32 pm

Well, I agree. This had to be done one day. SEO was just being manipulated. Guest posting merely for the sake of backlinks was truly going to be harmful in long terms. Google is just awesome, Thank you Matt Cuts. It means a lot for writers who strive for quality, not backlinks.

**Louie Sison**

January 20, 2014 at 11:06 pm

Bye guest blogging. You had your reign.

**Flavio Graf (ecommerce guy)**

January 20, 2014 at 11:09 pm

Matt, The single most important anti-spam action you could undertake is getting rid of many of those Google properties that found a way to the top of SERPS with their useless content.

Could you, as an example, tell me why Google Shopping even exists? Google knows the product, Google knows the source. You could easily point search directly to the source. But no. That would mean zero revenue for Google. Lets invent this G Shopping shit and charge for clicks. Does that sound like no-fudging, no-spam, no-BS top SERP??

But fixing that would probably mean that you lose your all-star engineering status at Google and maybe your job. That will require some balls.

Don't give yourself excuses. Get your views across. Make that your next 30-day challenge - since you are into that shit-. Take the challenge of being honest to yourself.

**John**

January 20, 2014 at 11:17 pm

My idea is instead of creating content for links, just try to produce a high quality and valuable post for the readers. Instead of adding your website link, add a G+ profile link or twitter, fb page links so people can easily find you. Informative content will definitely gives referral traffic.

**Veerender**

January 20, 2014 at 11:39 pm

I work for a news website and we have several best news contributors. Generally they dont ask for links in each news they write for us but yes sometimes they would like to promote them self aswell, Do you suggest to reject their offer for one back link and loose a valuable contributor for our site?

**Stacey Cavanagh**

January 20, 2014 at 11:43 pm

I receive about 15 such emails a day and they all get marked as phishing attempts 😞

However, I'd argue the place for legitimate guest blogging (or editorial contribution). Worth pointing out that even some Google Blogs accept those.

[analytics.blogspot.co.uk/2013/12/google-analytics-dashboards-for-quick.html](http://analytics.blogspot.co.uk/2013/12/google-analytics-dashboards-for-quick.html)  
[analytics.blogspot.co.uk/2010/07/using-wrong-tracking-code-can-cost-you.html](http://analytics.blogspot.co.uk/2010/07/using-wrong-tracking-code-can-cost-you.html)

**Vikas**

January 21, 2014 at 1:45 am

I also agree with you if Google are not allowing same guidelines to promote their contest so why to recommend guidelines to other. Anyway I appreciate Google's efforts as they want to produce top quality search result and taking complete care of it. However this post will defiantly encourage many blogger to not accept guest post. Every small company does not have much scope to do more activity that might notice by big brands like Mashable or Forbes and their editor starts to write for them. They have only option to write some awesome stuff that can be noticed by real users and sure guest blogging was nice platform to spread it.

I do never think that trying to create connection with blogger is spam but sure asking for follow links is violating guidelines.

Thank you Matt

**Evan Chacker**

January 20, 2014 at 11:43 pm

Guest posts should be about creating so much value that readers will come check you out and not about back-links.

Good for you Matt! Good for all of us really.

**Daniele**

January 20, 2014 at 11:45 pm

I accept guest posts in my blog. I received some "bad" proposal, but I refused them. I don't accept, for example, links in the text body. And now I accept guest posts only if I know the blogger and he/she has commented in my blog. I have hard and fast rules for guest posting in my blog.

So, guest blogging is done only if you look at this blogging marketing as an SEO way to get link. In my opinion, guest blogging is a way to get quality content in my blog and to share my name and my experience in other blogs.

**McMohan**

January 20, 2014 at 11:47 pm

Any act should be judged by its utility. This is where social media metrics and website usage metrics come in handy IMO. If a guest blog post is well received by the blog's audience, shared and liked on social networks, and has non-spammy comments appreciating/criticizing the post, that post is only making the internet a better place and the site linked within should be treated as such.

**Amit Panchal**

January 20, 2014 at 11:47 pm

There are still many good reasons to do some guest blogging (exposure, branding, increased reach, Community etc.) !!

**Denish**

January 20, 2014 at 11:49 pm

Hello Matts, I would like to thank you to wake me up, but I am still confused what are the benchmarks of guest blogging spammers. I read here and found that if a website is giving no follow link then there would be no spamming. ohh

**Mukesh**

January 21, 2014 at 12:00 am

Thanks matt for this information, i also think guest posting activity is increasing day by day to get link back, for this they creating spammy articles for others website who offering gust posting in their websites/ blogs. In now days its just like a article posting in article directory with a new name of guest posting.

**Julia McCoy**

January 21, 2014 at 12:02 am

Guest blogging STILL works, but just like ALL web content, only if it's high quality. Guest blogs like SearchEngineLand, SocialMediaToday, SiteProNews.com, are all "multi-author," very high quality, and have brought me great results and feedback for featuring my posts. Quality content everywhere online is true across the board now, per Google's search rules (and pretty much what you should be doing anyway if a solid brand is what you want to establish online). From press releases to articles to web content, it works only if it's consistent in high quality. Sidenote: I've been annoyed myself by the saturation in guest blogging lately that is spammy. I didn't understand how individuals approaching me to write for my blog could be negative, till I realized they had a much lower reputation that I did--and I would be doing them a huge favor!

**Noman Ali**

January 21, 2014 at 12:03 am

Well this is a positive step, but i like to know one thing. As i do guest blogging to but before posting or sending a post to editor I have check the following things:

1. Domain Authority of the web
2. Social Shares of the web
3. Business Niche

Yes some where I also think it will help in ranking but for this I am not select low quality website I always prefer high authority and good blogging sites, SO this will be also a spammy for you?

**Tim Taylor**

January 21, 2014 at 12:32 am

I think it's time for a change in the mind of some guest bloggers and posters...  
Nice that you guys see it similar - thats not that suprising..

**George**

January 21, 2014 at 12:34 am

Yes,i also hate guest posting, any one could pay an even to get a dofollow from high PR blog.Matt I think you should check if author of that post have atleast 5 posts in that particular domain,so bye bye guest posting.

**Simon**

January 21, 2014 at 12:35 am

Dear People,

For years spamm team has been a snake that is biting it's own tale. From year to year more and more people are doing SEO. With more SEO players on the market - Google, in return,

is limiting ways to get google links. Mat, paid links are not going anywhere, they are just becoming more and more expensive. By "hard work" you mean reach out and get 8K backlink off a super-legit website? Well, I see people who do 1-2 months sites that top inbetween your updates – cash out, move on – is much cheaper than buying super-expensive yet legit links, posts, directories...

All this tell's SEO's that Spamm team is relentless in improving the search results. But for those who can read between the lines – it tells: "They are so worried about links manipulation, you gotta get your hands on some good stuff! Looks like juicy SERP's will remain 99% link-based for a very, very long time."

**Bhavuk Khandelwal**

January 21, 2014 at 12:47 am

Hey Matt Thanks for this useful and clear clarification, one thing i want to know is, are you saying clear NO to guest blogging or just allowing only High quality guest posts.

If high quality guest posts are fine than how many post can an author submit per month?

Any idea about this? Please share your reply

**Nishant**

January 21, 2014 at 12:50 am

I agree that lots of people charge for guest posting, but what about genuine guest blogger who offer free guest posting and provide informative content to the audience.

**Steve Masters**

January 21, 2014 at 12:50 am

A great summary, Matt. To me the distinction is clear and simple. If you are writing an article just for the link, you aren't thinking about the audience first. Why should a quality site want to publish something that its readers would not be wowed by?

As a writer (or provider of content for other people), you should be thinking of pleasing the editor and of giving that editor's readers something that they would want to share.

In some cases, that will mean not including a link at all and just getting a brand mention, but content should be journalistic, not a single-brand press release.

**Jimmy Simond**

January 21, 2014 at 12:53 am

Before I was also not accumulated with the exact spammy posts,,,, even I own 6 blogs,,, and on 4, I used to accept guest posts. At the end of last year when I reviewed the links on my sites, which I accepted as guest post, I saw that they are wrote for only inserting the links, even some were inserted forcefully anchor to increase their 1 link..... But now I totally stopped to accept guest post from them, whom I don't know..... I do write my own posts 2 or 4 in a month for my sites.

**Bigorno**

January 21, 2014 at 12:53 am

Hi Matt,

Honestly if i believe all of what you said, so it exists two kind of guest blogging, the nice one with nofollow attribute on external links and the bad one with the dofollow attribute... While the nice one is respecting Google guidelines the second not...

But doe's the nofollow guest post necessary better than the dofollow guest post ? As you

said few years ago guest blogging was good, are you claiming that dofollow guest blogging is necessary spammy ?

Please Matt, if you had to make a choice (and you have it), what do you think (or guys at Google thinks) is better. A no taste guest blog with the nofollow attribute, or a great guest blog that drive good targeted traffic but that deals also with search engine within the dofollow attribute ?

Thanks

**Adrian**

January 21, 2014 at 12:56 am

Hello Matt,

first time writing you and asking myself what to do with guest blogs which were set in the past? Remove them (some have really high quality and are ranking good in the serps), set them nofollow or just waiting what will happen?

Best regards from Germany

**Blaze**

January 21, 2014 at 12:58 am

So what would be a criteria #1 for Google Search Engine to distinguish SEO guest posting from community building guest posting?

The number of articles per month from the author perhaps? Now after the Google author verification, things could be so much easier (for Google)

**Gareth**

January 21, 2014 at 1:01 am

Matt – how are you going to differentiate between a good guest post and a bad one? We can all eyeball guest blogs & see what's good or bad, but I imagine Google's not going to go through every guest post one by one. Would be interesting to know how you define good vs bad algorithmically...

PS – I love the fact that people on here are commenting that they're going after "quality backlinks". Warms the cockles, that does.

**Doc Sheldon**

January 21, 2014 at 1:03 am

Not sure why I got identified as a spammer, Matt. I think you know better. Any chance of a manual review? 😞

**mascali**

January 21, 2014 at 1:04 am

I don't think is fair to put up at the same level who shows his face and his real identity with some vulgar spammer.

The Authorship Google added should have been immune to such algorithms.

**George**

January 21, 2014 at 1:06 am

Forgot to ask – What will be the effects of already guest posted articles on many blogs?

**John Orton**



January 21, 2014 at 1:14 am

It would be much better if this post also talk about possible/better solutions. Am sorry to say but this post did not add any VALUE. I know guest posting on poor sites is bad. Am interested to know the better alternatives of guest posting. There are millions of such post publish on www which just talk about one aspect i.e. stop doing this and that. The world is not interested in just listening issues and problems, there is need to tell solutions. If you just talk about problems without providing proper solutions, the post should be considered as incomplete.



**George Ranjeev**

January 21, 2014 at 1:15 am

But there are some genuine quality content as guest post, which in many cases are not spam,so will they also be affected ?



**Yameen Khan**

January 21, 2014 at 1:26 am

What if someone write about us and publish that post somewhere and it look likes guest post with do-follow link. Is that still go unnatural?

and if I want to give an guest post to the blog who write about the business we have (or we can say a niche blog or website), it still spam? or unnatural links?



**Vikas**

January 21, 2014 at 1:45 am

I also agree with you if Google are not allowing same guidelines to promote their contest so why to recommend guidelines to other. Anyway I appreciate Google's efforts as they want to produce top quality search result and taking complete care of it. However this post will defiantly encourage many blogger to not accept guest post. Every small company does not have much scope to do more activity that might notice by big brands like Mashable or Forbes and their editor starts to write for them. They have only option to write some awesome stuff that can be noticed by real users and sure guest blogging was nice platform to spread it.

I do never think that trying to create connection with blogger is spam but sure asking for follow links is violating guidelines.

Thank you Matt



**Bobi**

January 21, 2014 at 1:47 am

Hei matt, read this: <http://nenadseo.com/new-seo/> it`s just the truth. No big brand has been penalized more than 1 months, why ? I wait for your answer, in case you accept my comment.



**Matt Cutts**

January 21, 2014 at 12:02 pm

Bobi, we have certainly taken action on large sites for long periods of time.



**Utkarsh Sahu**

January 21, 2014 at 1:57 am

It would be a big challenge to differentiate between guest blogging and spammy practices. If Google authorship is considered then it gets really tough to see if the guest posts are good or bad, since the author's credibility vouches for the content value itself.

So how do we determine the quality of a post, because just authorship isn't enough? Bad content would get preference over good and valuable content, just because the author's reputation precedes the bad content.

Personally, I try to make sure that my posts have value and is beneficial to the reader. But on the back of reputed authorship, bad quality blogs get ranked and mine doesn't. What is Google's take on this dilemma?

**Annarita Faggioni**

January 21, 2014 at 2:00 am

It's a matter of quality. Do you want to write a good post? You don't put absurd links everywhere, perhaps with a specific link. The guest blogging is not dead in the strict sense, that way of doing guest blogging as a technique to attract links it's dead. Personally, I use guest blogging, but I select the people who write on my blog and I assure you that there are no payments or spam techniques during the writing of the post. It's one thing I do before for my users, second only to Google for analysis.

**Mohnesh Kohli**

January 21, 2014 at 2:00 am

Guest posting is not a bad practice provided it is not done with the main aim of getting links. Thanks Matt for clarifications and guidance on this topic.

**Himanshu**

January 21, 2014 at 2:59 am

If not guest posting, how do you thing webmaster can get links on authority sites.

**Syed Qasim**

January 21, 2014 at 2:08 am

Dear Matt Cutts. Please tell us the best method for gaining the quality link like Guest Blogging. Google is going to make SEO dead i think :(.

**Paul Baguley**

January 21, 2014 at 2:15 am

Thank you Matt for adding this extra bit and for changing the title. I think this will have stopped the questions about all guest posts being banned. Really if you are doing a guest post for a link then yes you should be punished.

**Jonathan Hatton**

January 21, 2014 at 2:29 am

How are Google going to be able to distinguish between a genuine company/product recommendation and a paid link?

Will genuine blog endorsements or product reviews be penalised, I cant see that happening. And if it does surely that's unfair..

**Vivek Darak**

January 21, 2014 at 2:31 am

Is there any other way that you suggest is not spamming while building Link and reputation over Web. I thought having a link around your niche contents on any domain is always useful.

P.S. Building community or organizing events requires a lot of Capital that small organization

may not afford.

**Ruben Licera Jr.**

January 21, 2014 at 2:34 am

Hello Matt.

Thanks for this blogpost and the latest edits and additions you made in your blogpost. It clearly defines as to what type of guest blogging would work and how should guest blogging be used. This clarification will also differentiate the spammy sites and authors from the reliable and insightful bloggers and websites.

**Akash Arora**

January 21, 2014 at 2:47 am

Hi Matts, First of all that's a great! news, but I am little disagreed with your post however your title is related to SEO I know but in my Opinion – Google should focus more on Commercial Links as these days many branded websites are posting paid posts on blogs.

But I think Google should transfer SEO value to those blogs, who shares links in their Community Especially as it's done usually when we remember our friends and we do share the links and many bloggers do this things without any intention of getting Link Juice and all.

What you say Matts?

**Mainak Banerjee**

January 21, 2014 at 2:51 am

So Matt, what I get out of the whole thing as a writer, now you cannot ask for a link towards your own site that holds your entire profile. Do you really think it's justified? Why I don't ask people to visit my site to know more about me and my work? What the harm in doing the same?

**Salvatore Capolupo**

January 21, 2014 at 2:57 am

Hello,

I think the problem is "just" related to backlinks obsession that affects many of us, so when you can't assure any citation to your website you may think to exploit GB as an "masked" article marketing strategy. But any web content that is useful and give added value to the readers should not considered bad, also if it's used aka "guest blog" and does not involve "links selling"/PageRank manipulation, don't you?

Greetings from Italy 😊

**Zafar Ahmed**

January 21, 2014 at 2:58 am

I am hoping that whatever link de-valuation update Google makes for guest posting that the legitimate content marketing of quality content doesn't get caught in the friendly fire.

**Andy**

January 21, 2014 at 3:02 am

I have seen many SEO companies which are trying to manipulate page rank by creating blog posts just to boost their client's link profiles and still Google reward them with high rankings.

**Yaroslav Troshchey**

January 21, 2014 at 3:09 am

Hello,

Hmmmm guest blogging, now this is definitely a controversial topic to talk about with regards to SEO.

I will have to agree with Matt simply because I know the horrors that guest blogging can create. I have been to many different articles and blogs around the web where people/automated bots have utterly destroyed that post because they wanted to get a backlink from there.

Now having said that I guess that the main question to be asked here is "Can Google effectively determine who is abusing guest blogging and who is not?"

But since I gave up guest blogging for backlinking years ago I am not fussed 😊

I do really hope though that if people will be penalised for guest blogging as a means of getting backlinks that Google will be effective in allowing those webmasters to disavow those links otherwise this could cause a lot of businesses major issues, especially if they have outsourced SEO to a company who meddles in those "dark arts".

Wrapping it all up I would say that this is a great post as it gives a lot of insight in to the thought process of Google when considering the implications of guest blogging.

So for now Matt, Farewell...

**Ekendra**

January 21, 2014 at 7:49 am

Good points Yaroslav.

By this, business of many companies and guest-blogging websites are questioned. However, outsourced SEO with "dark arts" motive and content farm sites will be needing some reform which obviously should be good for searchers.

Google looks like in refining and filtering good contents for users. That's really appreciable. Thanks for the share, Matt.

**Daylan Pearce**

January 21, 2014 at 3:10 am

If you go by the rule of - "Build content and experiences for your audience and not the search engines. If you're doing something that doesn't influence/touch your audience, the you probably shouldn't do it" - then I reckon you'll be ok. That's not only good SEO, that's good marketing, and I don't see that changing (until the inevitable day that paid ads and Google products are 100% of most Google SERPs).

Here's a thought: Compare SEO it to mexican food (because everyone love mexican food) Eating a large amount of burritos is bad for you, eventually you're gonna hurt your health through either eating too many or eating the really unhealthy, fatty burritos. But don't completely stop eating burritos - they're great after all. The trick is to eat in moderation and only get the really healthy burritos without the bad ingredients. And make sure you try tacos and enchiladas, and nachos. And be sure to do other activities other than eating Mexican food.  
(PS: Mexican food is great, don't give up on it because it's tricky to make now. Just get better at making it. Make it better than it ever was before).

Having said that though, it'd be great to just not give value to poor links and methods - whether they are from guest posts, directories, comments, widgets, whatever? Devalue takes the wind out of the sails. Spammers can do it all they want and it'll have no benefit and no reward, and won't completely decimate poor sites out there who got lead down a

bad path by snake oil salesmen.

**Andrew Nattan**

January 21, 2014 at 3:12 am

"In general I wouldn't recommend accepting a guest blog post unless you are willing to vouch for someone personally or know them well."

How are Google going to check whether I know them well? Are you going to phone me up to run a 'Mister and Mrs' style quiz to see if I know my contributors' music tastes? Or are you going to subtly insinuate that we need to add everyone we know to the dead dog that is Google+ in order to prove the existence of our interpersonal relationships?

Because let's face it Matt, your algorithm isn't getting better. It's getting worse. And I'm 100% convinced that there's no way Google can accurately judge whether I have a pre-existing relationship with someone who posts on my site.

**Rifat Rahn**

January 21, 2014 at 3:22 am

I found that internet marketing is same as traditional business marketing. There is no difference just platform is different. In traditional marketing, If I produce any good I have to marketing it. I need to advertise my good among people. Whether it's good or bad I have told everyone my product is better one. If I don't do anything, no one will buy. So same thing is in web unless until I create backlinks or give advertisement no one will visit my site. Google still doesn't disclose how their search engine works so from the beginning its prove that backlink works for ranking. But the problem is people misusing this technique, especially those who are doing SEO. So I think google should give some structure by which web marketer can rank their sites. If they don't, we will be a monopoly only some rich site will stay and other will die. Finally no one will come newly

**Matt Norman**

January 21, 2014 at 3:25 am

We use Cision to distribute genuine newsworthy content and news articles to high quality journalists, news outlets and industry-specific sites.

This method of PR has been quite successful in earning links from genuine, high quality and relevant websites – but obviously the article that is used is very similar, if not the same, each time it is put on a new site because it is sent as a press release.

I hope I'm right in assuming that this is classed as a good method of earning links to my site, especially as it is on relevant sites with relevant, unique and interesting content.

It isn't guest blogging because it is the same authors who upload the articles and goes under their name on their site, but I'm just wondering if it would fall under "duplicate content"?

Thanks all!

**Juan Luis Mora**

January 21, 2014 at 3:27 am

Hello

I think guest posting is similar to interview in radio, TV or newspaper. These appearances make guest's popularity grows because it has appeared in a quality and relevance site.

Therefore I see no problem with win authority through guest publication, as well as it does in traditional media.

Very different is to be involved in trading of low-quality articles or low quality sites only to get followed links with money anchors.

**Sharjeel Mahmood**

January 21, 2014 at 3:37 am

You are right Matt, but don't you think Google should devise more sophisticated algorithms to counter between who is doing guest posts with honesty and who is not? I mean it is not fair to ban or discourage guest blogging altogether, correct me if I am wrong!

**Geoff Jackson**

January 21, 2014 at 9:37 am

I'm pretty convinced Google already has this in place.

Those bloggers that are providing great value to their readers and reaping the rewards are not looking over their shoulders at what Google is doing all the time. It's far easier for Matt to direct this at guest blogging in general (even though he did emphasise that there is no problem when carried out with legitimate intentions) and attempt to warn the masses of the dangers that are coming if you're frequently churning out low quality garbage for spammy blogs purely for the purpose of adding links to your website's link profile.

Those blogs that are doing this right, I'm sure won't even feel the affect of what Google have planned to combat low quality guest blogging. Google's algorithms are far smarter than most give them credit for...

**Sharjeel Mahmood**

January 21, 2014 at 11:06 pm

Partly agreed! but some how you need to keep Google framework & algos in mind just to feel 'extra' safe!, anyways! you raised a good point.

**Matt Porter**

January 21, 2014 at 3:57 am

The rise of spam seo's emailing me constantly regarding guest posts or outsourcing service to them is the bane of my existence! Well maybe its not that bad now I have upped the settings on Spam Assassin, but its highly annoying. My new tactic is to respond with CatGifs 😊 this has started to defer repeat, spam offenders.

**Andrew**

January 21, 2014 at 4:33 am

I don't think this will get posted but I will try anyway...

Well, certainly guest blogging still is, and will be a great way to gain SEO benefits, INDIRECTLY (and no matter what Google and Google's anti spam team will do...).

It looks like you Matt have forgotten that Google is just a website, service like many other out there. Google is not Internet. It's used to drive traffic to the websites, but it's only one of tens of ways to get that traffic. And because of late Google's actions that are questionable, there is a shift happening right now, and many webmasters is abandoning Google and learning how to generate traffic without Google's search function (There is whole new market growing right now, it's back to preGoogle internet...). Also, many will abandon G+, Gmail, Analytics, Chrome and other services soon, and they will use alternative providers.

There are ways to get MUCH better ROI by employing alternative traffic generation methods, than just relying on Google's search function.

So, let's say I have generated a bunch of targeted traffic to my websites using all possible (legal) means (and a lot of Guest blogging in the mix as well!). It's only a matter of time Google will pick up that traffic, measure it and rank my website. In that case, Google ranking is only a byproduct of traffic generation. It's just a bonus.

Also, if I want to pay for article placement then I will, it's my business... not Google's business.

So, Guest blogging and other forms of distributing traffic are here for good. Those methods were here before Google, and will stay long after Google is gone.

P.S I'm sorry for my English...

**Geoff Jackson**

January 21, 2014 at 9:41 am

You're right, it's your website, do what you want with it.

But if your only sole intention is to produce low quality rubbish in order to manipulate any engine into increasing the visibility of your website, directly, indirectly or any other way you wish to put it, then simply put, you don't deserve to be found.

Why not just provide great value to your customers? That way you won't have to worry about what Google are doing or whether they'll be sending you any direct traffic via organic search or not.

**Andrew**

January 21, 2014 at 11:21 am

Geoff,

I don't need to worry about Google anyway. For me traffic they are providing is only a byproduct (huge "byproduct" at times...) of creating a real, targeted, "worm", willing to buy traffic to my site/s.

Guest blogging as a pure spam only for link creation? Sure... it's rubbish. That's even hard to call guest blogging. Still, as we can see, this "rubbish" has its place in SEO as well... Bad for Google (to some extent..) and some of its users, some of SEOs who try to stay ok with G guidelines, good for other guys.

**Geoff Jackson**

January 21, 2014 at 4:38 am

I really wish this kind of announcement wasn't published. To many people read way too much into this and this leads to a whole web scared of having anything to do with 'guest blogging' and we'll now probably see many businesses requesting the removal of 'guest posts' and low quality blogs demanding money for doing so.

The reality is though, *nothing has changed*. Artificially sourcing links via any means will always be against Google's guidelines. Great contributions to blogs that have a real audience, with real interest, that serves great value and that you'd vouch for, is never going to cause a problem.

Contribute to blogs because you have something worth saying that the readers want to hear. As soon as your objective becomes for the benefit of a gaining a link, you're on rocky ground and what is being produced is not natural. Great content naturally earns links. If you're providing value, others will link to it.

The fact that Matt's announced this though doesn't mean anything will change. Nothing at all will. In ten years time, we'll still be receiving these trashy emails that mention 'high

quality guest postings' for 'high PR' websites or some other nonsensical garbage in the same way we still receive bucket loads of spam about article submissions, search engine submissions, web directory submissions, social bookmarking and web 2.0 links – and any other absolute tripe.

I'd love to seek further clarification though on:-

If I write a well researched, fresh take on a subject for a blog and link out multiple times in the article to relevant sources for citations, backing up statements, to reference, for example, how will Google see these links? I hope Google is clever enough to determine that the links are for the benefit of the reader. They should be – if it ever gets to the stage where they're expecting non web-savvy bloggers to manually add nofollow to all links then this will become unnatural and well, just plain ridiculous.

I suppose naturally, the question on a lot of people's mind will be what about the author bio? Will be this the number one way that Google detects a guest contribution. Surely these are acceptable if they legitimately provide a bit of blurb about the author and link out sensibly (branded anchors)?



**aaawaqas**

January 21, 2014 at 4:44 am

Hi,,

BREAKING: Beware of Spammy Guest Blogging!!! Here's a Really Evil Example:  
<http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/guest-post-vanessa-fox-on-organic-site-review-session/> ...  
See the dofollow "site review tool" link.

Spam and Should be Banned both Websites. Linking and Receiving. Thanks



**Matt Cutts**

January 21, 2014 at 9:24 am

Nope, this is actually an example of high-quality guest blogging that remains valuable. I know Vanessa and I'm happy to vouch for her. Her intent was to inform an audience, not to get links or get PageRank. And if you can't tell the difference, then you should avoid accepting guest posts on your site.



**Smith**

January 21, 2014 at 10:11 am

How would Google algorithm determine whether the site owner is vouching for the author or if the site owner personally know the guest author?



**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 2:58 am

The algorithm doesn't need to know this.

This is just the recommended advice for bloggers that are only to contribute to other blogs. If you don't have the knowledge and experience to manually identify the value and ethics of the blog, then knowing or vouching for the blog owners personally would probably mean you do.



**Stefan Misaras**

January 21, 2014 at 4:53 am

It is surely good news to hear that spammy guest blogging (to which many reverted after

some of the latest google search algorithm update) is finally put on the spot. However, it will be very hard to choose which websites have a guest blog post that is genuine and which doesn't. It will be very hard to believe that small blogs will re-blog and allow lots of guest blog posts simply because they want to, while huge-audience blogs like copyblogger.com and boingboing.net do multi-user blogging as a common practice.

I think we will hear about a lot of cases of people being penalized for absolutely no reason (except that they like a certain blogger and so they invited him to write something on his blog)....but I am surely happy that it is all becoming more organic.

"Write for people and not for search engines or for SEO" – that's good stuff!

**James**

January 21, 2014 at 4:55 am

Hi Matts,

Allow me to share my personal experience. It was December 17th, 2013 precisely, I was contacted via unsolicited email asking to guest post. Being naïve and excited that someone recognize my blog to guest post, I accepted her article.

However, I realized that it was not rich as my other blog posts, so I had to rename the title and redrafted the whole article to about 70 percent editing.

On the 19th, I published the post, but only to realize that she linked out to some agencies, and in the author bio, she also linked out to another website ( that deals with link building). I was upset and had to take off the links and simply linked to her own twitter account.

I think one needs to be careful and heed to your clear instruction, thank you.

**Andrew Crook**

January 21, 2014 at 5:02 am

I think we are long past the stage where **anything** on the net, especially new, can be spun and over-hyped into some sort of spammy IM marketing gimmick.

I personally love the idea of guest posting, done right, I have often wondered about having just an "about me" page as my website and contributing high quality posts to other sites instead. I would certainly have a better chance of having my content read.

I am also a supporter of syndicated content done right (no-follow etc) under creative commons but I would keep the two separate.... thats another story.

**Daniel vassiliou**

January 25, 2014 at 9:25 am

What idiot wants to write a post for a site for a no follow link? Most sites do not have large enough pools of visitors to justify the traffic without the page rank/DA advantage. So we have elitism now based on visitor numbers? What if sites with high numbers of visitors do not accept contributions? Why value do follow links and then encourage everyone to get no follow ones? Answers on a postcard from the mental asylum please!!

**Macca Sherifi**

January 21, 2014 at 5:22 am

What about posting on 'authority' sites? Would you discourage that behavior too? Surely, if someone like the Huffington Post was looking for a guest author, and you have a link back to your site / blog, that won't get penalised by Google? I'd love to hear your thoughts on this matter – Macca

**Robert Moore**

January 21, 2014 at 5:22 am

So many blogs accepting posts originate in the US and they are passing page rank to websites in the UK despite being completely irrelevant and will no doubt not send any traffic to the UK site.

**Macca Sherifi**

January 21, 2014 at 5:25 am

What about guest posting on 'authority' sites? Surely Google won't penalise people who are posting on sites such as the Huffington Post with a linkback to personal sites / blogs? I'd love to hear your thoughts on this – Macca

**Jorge Ferreira**

January 21, 2014 at 5:38 am

Google can not understand as to distinguish between an article and an excellent guest mention because I'm such articles mentioning other Seos etc ....

**Alexander**

January 21, 2014 at 5:44 am

At last! Thank you Matt. Hopefully this means OUR site will now stop getting 10 of these a day. It may be useful to REALLY clarify where links and google are going as you have scared the hell of out most people. There still exists negative SEO for example, and people linking to websites without the consent of the webmaster, can googles algorithm detect something like that has not been added by me for example, i mean, does google KNOW when a link has placed by the site owner, and can differentiate sites that have scraped content or added links without the knowledge of the webmaster of a site?

**Alexander**

January 21, 2014 at 9:12 am

....in fact I have another question. The link I placed to me site in my first comment, yes I used my real name as suggested, but in doing so, have i PLACED AN UN-NATURAL LINK?

Have I unwittingly SPAMMED MYSELF? !

Matt should I add YOUR blog to disavow or will you overlook this heinous crime? 😊

**Dr. Michael Haley**

January 21, 2014 at 11:49 am

Alexander, my thoughts about this... my primary business and biggest website is about aloe vera – since I manufacture aloe vera to drink and aloe vera cosmetics. I would NOT put my company URL anywhere on this site – though I may have in the past when I didn't know any better. However, the URL does go to a crappy meaningless blog of mine. Doing that at least gives people an opportunity to find out who I am. Using my Facebook page also gives people an opportunity to find out who I am. But, personally, if I had links from an SEO site coming to my highly valued website about nutrition and aloe vera, yes, I would disavow it – even if they are nofollow. But I would like to hear what Matt Cutts has to say about this.

**Suraj Naik**

January 21, 2014 at 5:44 am

well, SEO should be organic, people should like your content & share it & that should be the only criteria to rank websites, because its people who are voting or vouching for it. Good step towards a pushing more clean SEO practices. I like it.



**Kim**

January 21, 2014 at 5:46 am

Hello Matt, like most of the others i agree with you.  
Guest-blogging is a spammy practice to get links....

...but...

....what if someone asks me if i want to write a guest-article on his blog or his website? Do i have to analyse the whole blog/Website if there are just spammy Articles or is it just important that the links in my article marked as nofollow?

And what do you think about the question which "Akash Arora" already asked: " Google should focus more on Commercial Links as these days many branded websites are posting paid posts on blogs"

Regars, Kim



**mirco simoncinio**

January 21, 2014 at 6:01 am

Dear Matt, is correct what do you say.  
FOR ALL, BUT disavow does it work?  
have you success stories?



**Amit**

January 21, 2014 at 6:08 am

Still doing a guest blogging is beneficial, because we get good number of traffic and leads from guest blogging which any business ultimately needs; As mentioned guest blogging still helps in exposure, branding, increased reach in the community.



**James Brockbank**

January 21, 2014 at 6:32 am

Matt, thanks for posting this...it certainly caused a stir within the digital marketing community last night it seems! It's funny you should post this now as on Sunday I had a guest post published (the irony of this) which looks at why guest blogging should be seen as part of a social strategy as opposed to as part of an SEO strategy. The post can be seen here: <http://www.marketme.co.uk/why-guest-blogging-needs-to-be-part-of-your-social-strategy>.

There's no doubting that guest blogging as a brand building tool is still VERY powerful and I can only assume that, when the content is nothing short of fantastic, that the host site is impeccable and that the links are simply a reference back to the author, that this cannot harm search positions?



**sadek**

January 21, 2014 at 6:36 am

This is really great move by Google and it's webspam team, as guest blogging has now became an industry, and people are making money out of this.

This was good until it was commercialized, people used to exchange thoughts with an wider range of audiences with the help of guest blogging, but now it's just for backlinks!! which is

not good for the whole internet.

**Bill**

January 21, 2014 at 6:51 am

This topic, to me, feels like a beauty contest, where the competitors are “free to do as they please” until the judges disagree. I got fake boobs to enhance my beauty, and you rewarded me by placing me first.

Then, 5 years later, you found out I had a boob job. And you took away my title and gave it to the woman who was “all natural” (except that she wore makeup, for God’s sake, and NOW she’s getting penalized).

My advice: Don’t even think about Google any more in terms of SEO. One day, *everything will be spam because everything will look unnatural. Look up spam, by the way. I think you’ve usurped the word’s meaning.*

*Just build great content, promote the hell out of it with real people, toot your own horn, and if you’re stuff is worth its salt, you’ll get traffic – direct traffic from sites who have visitors that share your target audience’s likes, wants, and desires.*

**Vinay**

January 21, 2014 at 7:06 am

Agreed guest blogging has been overused by spammers but how different is this than the site owner writing about someone’s else site in his/her blog ? for eg i own a high ranking blog and I accept money to write about services of someone else in my industry ? Can it be detected ?

I think the root of problems is how to get links because that seem to be driving the search ranking in your favor. Google or some other disrupter need to figure that out.

**Maximus McCullough**

January 21, 2014 at 7:21 am

This is a great heads up article for people accepting guest posts. I look at guest posts like comments, you just have to be aware of the content. I understand the article here is broad but isn’t that the whole point of spamming? lol. I think this article create great awareness that we as webmasters need to be careful and personally inspect the content within our websites. I take advantage of the contributor role function on my websites where I have to personally click the button to publish the article. People can contribute but if I see a spammy links, I hit the delete button and my readers are never exposed to that kind of garbage. Great article Matt, thanks for the heads up!

**Marli Mesibov**

January 21, 2014 at 7:23 am

I 100% agree with the main point of this article – as an editor of an online publication (UX Booth) I also receive lots and lots of spam “we will pay you for links” email. Which makes me ask: how do you think Google will differentiate in the future (or will they even be able to differentiate) between spammy sites full of spammier guest blogging, and online publications that work with a variety of authors (and pay the authors – sort of the opposite of accepting payment in exchange for links) and of course link back to those authors (though not to their companies)?

**Michelle**

January 21, 2014 at 7:24 am

One could say the same about all SEO tactics – sooner or later someone is going to find a way to abuse it and then more and more people will do the same. It’s all about “gaming” Google at this point and Matt and his team needs to look at how they are ranking sites so less people will concentrate on gaming Google’s algos and focus more on producing quality

content.

**Ryan Watkins**

January 21, 2014 at 7:28 am

Great article!

I would hope that Google's almighty algorithm would be able to differentiate between good and bad guest posts. I've seen the benefits a well-planned guest post strategy can achieve, but I've also had to wade through a million terrible websites to find what's best for my clients.

First link building, now guest blogging. Good SEO is becoming harder and harder to implement.

**Mohammed ALAMI**

January 21, 2014 at 7:37 am

Hey Matt I'm with you totally since I started my own blog I received very low quality articles to post on my blog in exchange I should have a link back ... I never accepted this practice because of the principle of reciprocity : If I accept low quality on my blog would I read it any more ?! I think the safest way to proceed is to think in terms of referral visits: if the blog is worth enough in its niche then it will bring visitors to guest blogger website but again I assume it's high quality post !

**Alexander**

January 21, 2014 at 9:15 am

So for \*\*\*WHAT reason\*\*\* would someone write a blog post for you if it is not for money or for a link to another website?

**Geoff Jackson**

January 21, 2014 at 9:47 am

Industry recognition, branding, referrals, discussion, engagement, authorship, portfolio – need I go on.

There's a lot more benefits of producing web content than money and links, they're the after-effects of real, genuine hard work!

**Michael E. Rubin**

January 21, 2014 at 7:51 am

The reality is that guest blogging is about authenticity, and should not be about boosting SEO metrics. A guest blog is about establishing credibility and broadening the number of voices and opinions. I've run a few multi-author guest blogs and also participated in a few over the years. Even in a professional, 100% corporate setting, the intention was not to boost SEO metrics.

At your service,  
Michael E. Rubin

**Richard**

January 21, 2014 at 7:56 am

Would this also include game and hardware type companies that are releasing a product (the most recent ones I have had are from a company that does PR for Nintendo) and will email a press release to subscribers that they can add to their site, 'if' they also include a few of links back buried within the text. The links do resolve to the official Nintendo site.

I never actually took them up on it, but wondered if this would be in the same boat as the Guest Publication posts that you have written about?



**Dinesh Ramakrishnan**

January 21, 2014 at 7:58 am

Sir, I thought guest blogging is one of the best ways to improve seo but I'm unaware of spammy guest bloggers. I may call them as ghost bloggers who brings negative seo. I can remember a proverb "Money makes many things" & So they use this as a tool to seed bad things in blogger's mind.

Thanks for the clarification.



**Bryan**

January 21, 2014 at 8:04 am

Thanks a lot, XXXXXXX XXXXXXX. Way to ruin everything. lol jk



**Kev Maw**

January 21, 2014 at 8:08 am

Hi Matt

Please, please answer how you plan to prevent black hats from targeting legitimate sites with Negative SEO. You are feeding these guys!

Last year, link directories, this year you are offering them guest blogs to hurt our sites!

Please Matt, this is the biggest issue facing smaller high quality sites right now and your silence is very deafening!



**Shashank Pathak**

January 21, 2014 at 8:08 am

Hi Matt,

Thanks for sharing the whole discussion about guest blogging pros and cons. But my question is that what about good stuff we shared on other person relevant theme or category blogs.

Thanks in Advance  
Shashank Pathak



**Clayburn**

January 21, 2014 at 8:08 am

Can I guest blog on mattcutts.com if I don't include any dofollow links? I won't even pay you!



**Chris M**

January 21, 2014 at 8:17 am

Would be easier to not count the links as opposed to penalizing a site. It will not be a single post that is going to damage a site. It is blatant abuse that is in the cross hairs. Seems like a lot of webmasters are freaking out, but it is probably because they abused the opportunity and feel like they are getting burned. A no-followed link in a post should be just that so it shouldn't matter. If you have authorship in place, have gained some authority and have actually posted on quality sites within your niche you will be fine. But again, it shouldn't be a penalty. Just don't count the links would be the easiest way to not hurt the mom and pops that were clueless as to what was happening. Not to say they couldn't of educated themselves, but seriously, a 60 year old lady blogging about gardening in her spare time

probably wouldn't have known where to start to even look for answers about a topic she didn't know existed. Quality, Authority, Niche and you will be fine ;p



**Kev Maw**

January 21, 2014 at 9:50 am

Perfectly put



**Laurie Neumann**

January 21, 2014 at 8:19 am

I'm glad to hear that Google isn't "throwing the baby out with the bath water" but only trying to weed out those who are being spammy.

With that said, what would you say are the best ways to get some good quality links to your website these days?



**Thomas**

January 21, 2014 at 8:42 am

So I see you've received my email.

Seriously though, they will be great articles. I paid \$9.38 for them on text broker. Let me know how many you want.

Cheers!



**Daniel Delos**

January 21, 2014 at 8:47 am

If this is about guest blogging purely for links that could make sense but discounting every guest blog post with dofollow links seems like Google is admitting defeat. Some of the best content I've read are guest blog posts (and yes they were done in part for SEO). Saying guest posting for SEO is dead is like Google just admitting they can't tell the difference between a quality guest blog post and a pure spam post with spun content. More power to the spammers...

Let's be realistic here... guest blogging to get targeted traffic, brand exposure, and yes, the dofollow backlink is a huge driver. It may be abused and spammed but that doesn't mean every guest blog post with a do follow link is spun gibberish. If Google wants to promote high quality content they have to give value to creating it and they have to actually be able to distinguish good quality sites and bad ones. Making a blanket statement that x-type of link is bad because some people are abusing it doesn't seem very productive.



**Randy**

January 21, 2014 at 8:51 am

How does this stop the practice of paid posting? You could argue that it actually kills a level of transparency. Previously, when guest blogging was thought acceptable, a guest post would include some author bio information. But what's to stop this same practice from continuing, except without the by-line. So, the site owner looking to build links pays the author to post it as if he (the blog author) wrote it himself, and it just includes a few links to the other site.

In a way Google is almost encouraging more spam if they're going to punish transparent guest blogging.



**Ovidiu Burduja**

January 21, 2014 at 8:52 am

I think we need to leave aside trends, as well as the rules which Google makes on-the-fly, to adapt their algorithms to those trends which have turned into spammy techniques. In other words, techniques which are Google-independent are truly universal and will be there long after Google had kicked it.

One such technique is to create a valuable piece of information which you can market across your segmented verticals. People will link to it or mention it by themselves; that's not spam and it stays there (theoretically) forever. If it's good, you can refresh it periodically, too.

In other words, we need to be less Google-dependent.

**Bill**

January 21, 2014 at 9:07 am

I sometimes accept posts from new authors if the content is well researched, flows well, and is appropriate for my readers. Actually, I can count on my hands how many Guest Posts I've approved.

I don't want commercial links in the post or writers who have no social following or klout. You want quality content and a quality author. No, I don't take those 300 to 450 word posts. It has to be in-depth, 800 words or more, with preference to ones with images, diagrams, charts and so forth. Just something you cannot ignore and would like to read. It is pretty easy to tell if the article is for spam backlinks or for marketing your brand like a Fortune 1000 company would.

**Andy Wright**

January 21, 2014 at 9:17 am

Move everything to PPC 😊

**Matt Cutts**

January 21, 2014 at 9:21 am

No Andy. My job is to make sure Google's search quality is as good as we can make it. I could care less if someone wants to advertise or not. My team doesn't make changes hoping to drive people to PPC or advertising.

**Andy Wright**

January 21, 2014 at 10:44 am

Matt, thanks for responding... my comment wasn't intended to undermine Google's efforts to clean up the web, I think everyone wants that. But I think that you're making Advertising a more stable and sustainable solution.

Just out of interest does this mean that the heading in a similar direction as Yandex and going to stop counting links as a ranking factor all together, and giving more emphasis on other rankings factors like Google+ and maps to make things more localised?

**Andy Wright**

January 21, 2014 at 10:46 am

Hi Matt, thanks for responding... my comment wasn't intended to undermine Google's efforts to clean up the web, I think everyone wants that. But I think that you're making Advertising a more stable and sustainable solution.

Just out of interest does this mean that the heading in a similar direction as Yandex and going to stop counting links as a ranking factor all together,

and giving more emphasis on other rankings factors like Google+ and maps to make things more localised?

**Mike Gracen**

January 21, 2014 at 11:12 am

Oh c'mon Matt. Even though you personally "could care less if someone wants to advertise", Google sure as Hell does. To most of us looking in, Google is an \_advertising\_ company that happens to drive most of that ad revenue via a search interface.

And while I still give you and your team (and many other exceptionally bright folks there) the benefit of the doubt with regards to trying to make the SERPS better, the bottom line – again from us looking in – is Google could give a flying f\*ck for the most part what happens.

As long as the monetization of user data keeps progressing and the Adwords machine keeps printing money to fund the exceptional lifestyle Googler's enjoy, Google X projects, M&A, whatever Larry's current healthcare obsession is, things are good at the Plex.

The catch is, things aren't so great out here for many, many honest (not spammers) webmasters, agencies, clients, etc. due to the direct actions of Google and comments like yours above don't do you any favors.

Just my \$0.02.

**Kev Maw**

January 21, 2014 at 12:07 pm

If the user experience is bad (ie poor organic search results), google stops being #1

When that happens, all the marketing in the world goes down the pan. So, I guess without Matt's search team keeping organic results alive, the Adwords revenue would drop off a cliff?

**Doroteya**

January 21, 2014 at 9:19 am

I'm glad that you have been so direct in your blog. Finally there is a clear guide to blog commenting, or almost (must admit that I'm a bit confused). Those people who have opened guest blog websites should have expected some spam, as the world is not so sweet and nice as we would like it to be. Most of the times, however, there is someone on the other side who should be approving each blog and then publishes only the good ones. I don't think I'm wrong at saying that websites like Moz and SEO Land have executed this technique very well. So, if you open a guest blog, you should still work hard instead of letting the blogs flow and approve themselves.

I tend to comment on blogs, but mainly to contribute to a conversation and build some professional relationships. Often I would insert a link to a page that, in my opinion, expands the topic. Is this spamming?

**Graham Smart**

January 21, 2014 at 9:22 am

Love it. Thanks Matt.

It's been annoying me for some time that SEO "experts" harp on about guest posting essentially rubbish information to help get links back.

I've steered away from this mostly because when I see crap like this being pulled, I hope that you guys pick up on this and eventually outlaw blatant spam.

Yes, there is room for useful articles and posts but 90% of em (made up percentage) are full

of rubbish.

I try my hardest to get links from places I think would be useful for my end users and to be honest links back and visitors from places spammy just are no good to me or my business. Clearly what I do isn't the best ( as the spammy competitors rank far better than me ) however I live in the hope that oneday, a better product will simply outshine in rankings than spam spam and more spam like everyone else seems to be doing.

Glad there some sense out there re: what Google think is allowed or tolerable. Hopefully my product will shine a little brighter when you dont give so much weight to this annoying habit SEO's seem to have at the moment.

**Jacobus Lavooij**

January 21, 2014 at 9:22 am

Dear Matt,

To some degree I agree with you, but I have seen blogs that have a lot of guest posts which really add value. For instance, a blog like ReelSEO has a lot of people guest blogging there, but they are always interesting to read and I doubt they get paid for it. These posts are a good read and add to the discussion about (in this case) video marketing. I am in no way affiliated to this blog or its owners, but I would really regret it if such a great blog would get punished for great content they are delivering.

I understand it is a jungle out there, but I hope you guys still keep in mind there are also people who play by the rules and deliver great content, even if it is coming from guest blogging.

Just my two cents.

Best, Jacobus

**Pat**

January 21, 2014 at 9:27 am

Can't blame Matt and his team on this one. Guest blogging really is nothing more than a form of link exchange that Google never liked anyway.

**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 2:45 am

That's not really true is it...

Guest blogging when done right is never a form of link exchange.

Low quality and spammy guest blogging services of course is for the purpose of acquiring over-optimised and unnatural/unearned links. But this isn't really guest blogging, it's just trash.

**Karen Cioffi**

January 21, 2014 at 9:30 am

I get emails from writers/marketers all the time requesting to send me a unique article for my blog. Because of this I set up a guidelines page on my site that specifies no 3rd party links – the one link allowed must go to the author's site.

I'm glad Google is taking action on this, but I'll still use guest blogging as a means of connecting and broadening my reach. And, I'll accept guest posts from people I know are legit.

**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 3:06 am

Those guidelines are artificial though and there's no easier way to detect low quality guest posts than seeing a stream of these posts on a blog all with one link on. This in itself isn't natural.

A decent piece of web content will naturally link out to numerous other websites that it references or uses citations to back up research, findings or facts, all for the use/benefit of the reader. The poor guidelines that many blogs put in place for guest bloggers is a large contributing factor to the low quality spammy scenario this has resulted in.

Most low quality guest posts are bare minimum, poorly written or article spun garbage with minimal research having even gone into the piece. Often with no links to relevant web content or imagery. Everything that makes a guest post low quality. Now look at the pattern of your guest posts on your own blog and ask yourself, does this look natural.

**Rob**

January 21, 2014 at 9:38 am

I love the feedback, and I'm an info junkie, so I appreciate this. But, is it wrong to long for the framing of: Do good things, and our algorithm will give credit where credit is due? This whole vein seems to paint the algo as a pretty blunt instrument, which is unsettling. I'm pretty sure it is complex and intelligent beyond even my capability to comprehend, which makes this have the flavor of cognitive dissonance. Isn't the raison d'être of the whole algo to recognize nice things at scale?

**Jawad Khan**

January 21, 2014 at 10:03 am

Thank God you added that clarification at the end of the post.

I believe guest blogging for SEO was never a good strategy to start with. But as others have rightly pointed out, guest blogging is still a mighty good way of branding your business and approaching a much broader audience.

What confuses me though, is how Google is going to classify a guest post as high quality or spammy.

**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 3:01 am

It's easily detectable whether a piece of content serves value ("high quality") or spammy.

If I can tell within 5 seconds of looking at a piece of web content whether it is ethical or spammy, then Google's going to find it pretty simple when it has a few hundred factors to take into account.

**marty**

January 21, 2014 at 10:07 am

I can see the spam now: "I can KILL your competitor's website from Google search with 100 guest blog posts a week in less than 60 days!...Yes, your site will be the ONLY one that shows up on search in your niche! Guaranteed or your money back!"

I mean, really, is this where things are headed?

**Greg McVey**



January 21, 2014 at 10:09 am

This is once again the spammers ruining it for everyone. Unfortunately, we've seen it all before in different ways. Article directories, Press Releases etc. Anything that can be done with great content on an authoritative site for the right reasons, will always be replicated in cruder ways, en masse by people too lazy to put the work in.

As Matt rightly says, this is why we can't have nice things.



**Abhishek kumar jha**

January 21, 2014 at 10:13 am

How about paid post, its totally different from Guest posts, and bloggers love to have those, but the effects must be same, Right!!!



**Atish Ranjan**

January 21, 2014 at 9:39 pm

Yes, Matt clearly stated that Paying for Dofollow links is clear violation of Google webmaster guidelines!



**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 2:56 am

Why would you charge for or pay for posts? If money is exchanged, it's advertising. And any links from a form of advertising should be nofollowed which subsequently deems your question irrelevant because then the links wouldn't pass PageRank and Google's web spam team wouldn't need to look at the case.

The bottom line is, if a blog is charging for guest contributions, then they don't even value the contribution themselves so you have to question, not only the quality of the contribution, but more importantly, the intention and morals of the blog. Either way, both parties in acceptance of this scenario are violating Google's terms of service unless any self-serving links are nofollowed.



**Vipin Kumar**

January 21, 2014 at 10:24 am

Matt,

Thanks for sharing this information.

is there any alternative link building practice you would recommend?



**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 2:47 am

Yeah. Don't go out and build links.

Research your market, identify your audience, write great content that solves their problems and build your brand, trust and authority in your industry!



**Imtiaz Ibne Alam**

January 21, 2014 at 10:34 am

Well, thanks for explaining the myths about guest blogging. So, the only way available for bloggers is to either say no to guest post offers or make the link "nofollow."

Maybe, it's not the place to ask question, but can you suggest what are the options in my

hand, now, to make my site authoritative? Because, google still requires thousands of links to make a site searchable.

**Isabel Gonzalez**

January 21, 2014 at 10:50 am

Hi Matt!

Thank you very much for the information. I think that is clear.

The idea I took from the article is that companies or individuals who are dedicated to guest post for links are wrong.

If you know any expert on issues related to our subject, demonstrating its responsibility as an author and want to share their knowledge to our blog, this is not negative.

The point is that Google wants to reward websites with good content, not just directories that serve as link farm.

I understood well?

One hug

Isabel

**Steve Krause**

January 21, 2014 at 10:51 am

Thanks for the update @Matt. Basic common sense if you ask me which is why I've never been a big fan of Guest blogging.

-S

**Jim Hobson**

January 21, 2014 at 11:15 am

Personally I believe that 90% of guest bloggers write only for SEO impact with no real interest in creating content to simply inform or engage discussion. I think it's worth noting that anyone can continue to write as many articles as they desire, just lower the expectations of getting an SEO boost. If you're writing articles with the purest of intentions, why would you be concerned about guest blogging being an ineffective SEO tool? Guest blogging has become spammy link building on steroids.

**Robin**

January 21, 2014 at 11:17 am

Thanks matt for sharing the insights.

Google has been always trying to make the web a better place to be, your take to stop guest blogging for link backs is surely gonna add more to it.

From ages SEOs have been known as people who manipulate Web to get sites on higher ranking but things like this would help to figure out better and cleaner ways to rank in Search results.

**Lee Keadle**

January 21, 2014 at 11:21 am

Matt, I've never allowed guest posts on my blog or even public comments because I worried it would open a flood gate of spammy behavior. However, I often link to other sites in my blog posts. These links are often unrelated since they're about upcoming events and things to do in my area (my site is for real estate, so this is a great way for my viewers to learn about my area). The sites also sometimes have lower PR simply because they're museum sites, etc. How does Google distinguish between spammy guest blogging links and legitimate links to other sites within a post? Should we make a practice to keep every link no-followed,

regardless of whether it's a guest post?

**Andrew**

January 21, 2014 at 11:30 am

This is somewhat related, but I have spammers trying to submit guest posts on my site. Then, they go and spam other sites with do-follow links to my site. I should mention that I do not permit spam on my site and delete it as soon as possible, that is, if any gets past my built-in filters. How can that affect me or my site?

Also, none of these links appear in my Webmaster Tools, so I can't disavow them. Based on a look at the Ahrefs site, however, I think these links number in ~2,000 range.

**Peter W**

January 21, 2014 at 11:33 am

Bravo Steve Wiiderman and Danny Sullivan – it is about time your points were properly addressed. What value does penalising have? Are we in a better place nearly 2 years after Penguin? Judging by the need to penalise Guest Blogs and the fact that Amazon and Ebay occupy 90% of most page 1 result sets, I would suggest not. So all that penalising has got us nowhere – spammers have just moved onto the next thing and it has resulted only in costing many genuine businesses that aren't SEO exports an awful lot of money and time undoing things; things that were done in good faith because at the time, that was how natural search worked.

Why not just devalue any link that is spam? The consensus appears to be that the algo just isn't good enough. So to get this straight, the algo's not good enough to devalue (which should affect no legit business, only spammers) but it \*is\* deemed good enough to issue penalties which acutely affect people's jobs and businesses?

Isn't it clear that whatever Google says today as "best practice" will become spam in 6-12 month's time? We seem to go round this circle like goldfish, forgetting that we've been here before. Google offers advice, people take it, then 6 months on get penalised for taking that advice because it has inevitably become a route for spammers.

I suspect Matt is splitting hairs when he says his team isn't interested in driving traffic to PPC. Perhaps not, but his bosses ought to be since they have to turn a profit. If Google aren't interested in pushing people to adwords then why the move to make nearly all referring keywords "not provided" in GA so that they are only available in adwords? Why make all other forms of web advertising that affect search position a "penalising" offence rather than no value? I can think of no other reason than it makes Google adwords becomes the one and only way to a) achieve rank against the big boys and b) receive search information about your site.

**Tony**

January 21, 2014 at 11:41 am

Good post and thanks for the update you added.

It seems like regular posting on your own website is the way to go. The posts should be well thought out, insightful and be something people are looking for. I really don't see how anyone can go wrong doing that.

Also, I've done a little of this a few years back and what happened was those articles were taken down as the sites went down. It was too much to manage my content on other people's websites. Since then, I've just focused on my own content with the hope that Google knows what they're doing and will honor my good content on my websites. At least that's what I'm reading from what you write here and from what Google seems to be indicating.

-T

**Mike**

January 21, 2014 at 11:42 am

Matt,

Why couldn't Google use AuthorRank or some metric to gauge the quality of guest posts and compare that to the amount posts by the site's author. For example if less than 5% of my site's posts are guest posts, and those guest post are from well know writer in the field. Google should view that as non abusive and quaintly. Thoughts?

**Volker Schaefer**

January 21, 2014 at 11:43 am

There are so many articles and blog posts out there since yesterday so I had to follow them to the source and now I understand what you mean:

It's not about guest posts but about guest posts for SEO and link building.

A normal guest post from an authority for my topic will be no problem.

But shouldn't we always write only for our readers and not for Google?

If my readers love my blog and come back daily because they are so excited what comes next Google will rank my blog anyway, or not?

**Ed Leake**

January 21, 2014 at 11:48 am

There's no surprise this post got so many interactions, quite a hot topic and one we keep frowning on ourselves!

"Ultimately, this is why we can't have nice things in the SEO space: a trend starts out as authentic. Then more and more people pile on until only the barest trace of legitimate behavior remains."

Sad but true; there are certain parts of the world where if we could turn the power off we'd get a significant reduction in the circulation and growth of spam tactics. They'd rather take your money then accept their tactics are miserable and fail their client.

It's incredibly frustrating that honest and hardworking outreach and brand awareness tactics are getting bombarded by the blackhatters out there. It ruins it for the rest of us because the lines start getting too blurred.

Just today we received an email for a "Guest Post Blog Finder" where they would not only find and place your content, but create too. Erm, so it's not a guest blog post then! Damn shame...

**Mike Rizzo**

January 21, 2014 at 11:48 am

Matt,

What is the best practice for corporate blogs with multiple authors? Seems like those could take a hit, that might not be warranted?

**Abhishek Mehta**

January 21, 2014 at 11:50 am

Matt – Everything seems to be banned or marked SPAM by Google. That would be great if

Google's Web spam protection can take arrange a hangout and educate SEO world about what Google exactly wants otherwise our half of life will be spend on building links and rest half in cleaning.

**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 2:51 am

What Google wants is irrelevant.

Forget what Google wants, give your customers what they want.

What your customers want is want Google wants to see. If your website visitors find your web content useful, valuable and relevant, then Google will be happy.

Google's intentions have never changed. They want to serve the most relevant and useful results to their search engine users.

**Dr. Josef Reindl**

January 21, 2014 at 11:58 am

Hi Matt,

to be honest your posting caught me by surprise.

I just prepared a guest post on "How to rank first on Google for any keyword within twelve minutes". My plan was to contact you as I am convinced that my marvelous piece would be a great addition to your blog.

Now I am slightly confused about my idea.

However, considering the high quality of my opus I am sure that you will be eager to publish it. So please check your email inbox in the next days to get hold of my post as early as possible.

I am looking forward to learning when visitors of your blog can enlighten themselves with my valuable insights.

Greetings to you,  
Josef

P.S. I am planning to include a few links to some gambling and viagra sites. Is Google still a bit uptight about this kind of sites? I hope not...

**Tommy Landry**

January 21, 2014 at 3:02 pm

LOL, too bad we don't have "like" buttons for funny comments. Yours wins the award on this chain.

**Dr. Josef Reindl**

January 22, 2014 at 12:09 am

Dear Tommy,

many thanks for your appreciation. That's very kind of you.

All the best to you,  
Josef

**Fergus McDonnell**

January 23, 2014 at 8:46 am

Thanks for the laugh. If Ggogle could capture the content and intention of your email (humour aside) and insert into their algorithms they would not have to use the very blunt hatchet they intend using.

I wonder where the next hot spamming area will be? Perhaps Google could do a hatchet job on it now before many good people waste their time and effort creating more real estate for Google to use to build their business.

Matt I know you have to tackle spam for all our benefits but you also need to respect the good content creators out there as well. It all we'll and fine to say the courts have upheld Googles right to deliver whatever results they care to but there is bigger responsibility here that is not yet covered by law. I can only imagine it eventually will be.

Fergus



**BlogMaster**

January 21, 2014 at 12:05 pm

Finally, it's the time to penalise Guest Spamming Post



**Alex S**

January 21, 2014 at 12:46 pm

Great post, Matt. I do not accept any guest posts on my blog because most of them do come from weird sources and bad backlink requests.

I don't see anything wrong when doing a blog posts for someone who you built a good relationship with (on or offline), who loves your content and who would be more than happy to approve your blog post (with backlinks or without). As you mentioned, guest blogging is about sharing and not about getting more backlinks.

I am sure Google's webspam team will be able to figure this one out.

p.s. I actually tried to use my real name to post this comment and the system said I am spam 😞



**Juergen Thulke**

January 21, 2014 at 1:18 pm

I think it is a good idea to penalise those seo practise. Normal blogger who write interesting content should rank first.



**Edward Antrobus**

January 21, 2014 at 2:14 pm

Hey, at least the offered to pay. Usually offers are for "and we won't even charge you!" But even worse than that, people have sent me guest posts with affiliate links in them.

Back when I was young and stupid, I accepted guest posts from places that were less than awesome. I've since gone back and nofollowed all of those links and even removed from my sitemap the ones that are particularly bad. I just wish there was an easier way to find and repair all the mistakes I made before I knew better.

**Dev**

January 21, 2014 at 2:52 pm

LOL, I am sure, atleast, yes, at least 50% comments on this Matt's post are coming for link building. ON A SERIOUS NOTE: I would say, this would be best move in part of Matt, Google, Me and You, to discourage all type of spamy practices to happen on our websites and blogs. Thank you Matt!

**Tommy Landry**

January 21, 2014 at 3:00 pm

Hi Matt,

Very interesting development of course, and not a complete surprise. Guest blogging has been a great value to me from a branding perspective, both for my company and personal brand. I do want to second the other comments that many webmasters wouldn't recognize a "nofollow" link if it kicked them in the jimmy.

What is the status of Authorship as a means of identity verification and potential measure of author authority? Wouldn't it be cleaner to require author markup on any guest post? This would ensure no fake names (a typical spammy tactic) and also allow you to understand whether an individual is a respected voice on any particular topic. It would also allow you to assign internet-wide authority to that individual's work.

This would be a simple fix to an overblown problem. If someone generates good content and the site owner wants to link to them in return, that should be fine IMHO.

There's also the issue of...when does this all stop? Will PR outreach start to look spammy at some point? How can we separate between earned and chased content? A good website who vets out guest bloggers is as good as a member of the press choosing to "award" a link for doing something useful. Will the major news outlets have to start nofollowing everything, because they can be pursued, schmoozed, and possibly bought as well?

The spirit of your response is great. However, the rabbit hole just keeps getting deeper. We are getting dangerously close to cutting off key pieces of the marketing mix in order to stay ranked organically. I really hope your team has authorship figured out to the point where we can stop having these frustrating conversations about spammers. No identity verified, no rank. Simple answer.

Thanks for considering these comments,  
Tommy Landry  
Return On Now

**timethief**

January 21, 2014 at 3:28 pm

I'm so happy to hear that Google is acting on this. I receive multiple opportunistic requests to become a guest blogger on my sites day in and day out. It's clear those who ask are spammers and scammers trying to get their links on my site and it's likewise clear that they don't read or they ignore my guest post policy which is on both sites. Thanks you so much.

**Ryan Biddulph**

January 21, 2014 at 3:54 pm

Hi Matt,

Agreed with this:

"It seems like most people are getting the spirit of what I was trying to say, but I'll add a bit more context. I'm not trying to throw the baby out with the bath water. There are still many good reasons to do some guest blogging (exposure, branding, increased reach, community, etc.). Those reasons existed way before Google and they'll continue into the future. And

there are absolutely some fantastic, high-quality guest bloggers out there. I changed the title of this post to make it more clear that I'm talking about guest blogging for search engine optimization (SEO) purposes.

I'm also not talking about multi-author blogs. High-quality multi-author blogs like Boing Boing have been around since the beginning of the web, and they can be compelling, wonderful, and useful."

As for SEO, if the guest posts rock, and you are seeing click throughs, well, you have no choice but to listen because web searchers drive Google more than anything or anyone else.

It is on Guest Posting sites and bloggers to responsibly place links and write kick butt content. If we do this, and take over the spammy crap, we can raise the rep of our niche..... and hey, I do the multi-author thing on my blog, so I can also apply this mindset to my site as well.

Thanks for sharing the developments with us!

Ryan



**Anca Bradley**

January 21, 2014 at 6:24 pm

Matt –

How about guest posting without any links added within the main body of the post, but with a link (anchor text would be the name of the company or the website) at the very bottom in a short author bio paragraph?

In this case, the content doesn't focus on a product/service/company someone is trying to promote. The best example I can think of is a home designer writing a post for homes.com about new trends in home decor this year, let's say; then, he/she sends in an author bio with the post.

What are your thoughts on that?



**Bas**

January 21, 2014 at 7:27 pm

I really love the fact that Google is working so hard to fight SEO spam. So keep up the good work Matt, I really think you guys do a great job. That being said...

Despite all of Google's efforts to fight bad links and preaching to focus on high quality content it's crazy to see good sites dropping rankings and black hat sites gaining, more than ever before. For example, one of our sites was in the top 2 results for more than 6 years on a highly competitive keyword. It's the only site in its niche with real user reviews, great 3d images, good text, user contributed photos and it's all 100% legit following all Google's guidelines..

We roughly invested \$150,000 in the site last year, in content and to optimize it for great user experience, all following Google's suggestions and guidelines. So it's hard to see competitors with crappy sites, affiliate sites, other and low quality content sites suddenly popping up from nowhere and outranking us, just because they are aggressively building links, and we are not. So right now I feel that at Google it's not all about the user experience, not about great content, nor trustworthy sites... It is all about the backlink count...

I really hope that Google will continue fighting link spam and that in the end there will be justice for all webmasters who are working real hard everyday to bring the best possible site for their users!



**Ivan Guel**

January 21, 2014 at 8:05 pm

Based on my previous experience managing a celebrity's blog, I couldn't agree with you more.

**Geoff Livingston**

January 21, 2014 at 9:30 pm

This may come as a shock to Google, but there is value to guest blogging beyond SEO. Like speaking to new audiences. I care less and less about PageRank with each formula twist it seems.

**Des Walsh**

January 21, 2014 at 10:37 pm

Thanks for this post, Matt. It gives me a basis to be practical about all this.

I was highly amused by your sample pitch email. I had receive an almost identical one a day or so before and frankly it looked a tad more plausible than the usual garbage. The only difference I can see is that the agency in question claims Melbourne as its base. Half way around the world for you but only half a continental coast away from me.

I guest post on a few very reputable multi-author sites and I realise you are not including them in the fork scenario.

**Bharati Ahuja**

January 21, 2014 at 11:14 pm

Just like the PageRank lost its true meaning because of the new link building industry which came up as an offshoot of the PageRank technology. The term content marketing got geared off to a different direction after Google announced the authorship markup and started displaying author pics. in SERPs. to whomsoever who implemented authorship markup.

Not only guest blogging but even blogging is becoming a spammy practice where people are just adding content for the sake of content and polluting the internet. Guest blogging is being attacked by Google because it also results in spammy links but sooner or later Google will have to deal with the over flow of content which is nothing less than junk on the internet.

It is very obvious that this mark up is being promoted by Google so that Google can filter the grain from the chaff and help its search engine users to get quality results and also help the users to know the person behind the published post. For that authors have to write informative and quality posts to prove themselves to be an authority on the subject. This requires a lot of effort and hard work from the writer's side. It is not about just adding a piece of code or linking your Google+ account to your site and claiming oneself to be called an author.

Recently many people lost the perk of getting their pics being displayed in SERPs and I think that is a great initiative by Google to give an indication to the people that just adding authorship markup is not enough. They need to continuously write quality and informative content consistently to achieve the author status proving their thought leadership. Whether it is blogging or guest blogging , Google or the world wide web only quality content matters.

My previous related comment <http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/webmaster-feature-requests/#comment-91929>

**Chris Ebbs**

January 22, 2014 at 1:15 am

Matt,

**Surely links in guest blog posts should always have been low value/spam?**

Let me explain....a link has been allowed in return for content rather than a link being given as a vote for high quality and useful content on the site being linked to. I know algorithmically it's impossible to measure if a link has been given based on merit but surely

most guest posts have 'signature' code/phrases that mark them out as such? In my mind they should never have been given value ...



**dana**

January 22, 2014 at 2:26 am

I hate this kind of update because we use guest blogging as a genuine way to build relationships and get nice brand alignment and whatnot. It's like penguin, we did every right and nice and by the rules but we got swept up in that too.

Spammers piss me off.



**Kerry Butters**

January 22, 2014 at 3:23 am

I've always thought that spammy emails are a terrible idea and find them in my own inbox far too often. Guest blogging is for me more about building relationships with editors and making an impact in the industry with excellent content. But I'm a writer this comes naturally and whilst my company has naturally evolved into one that deals now with SEO and content marketing, this has come off the back of good content, rather than link chasing. That's how it should be done IMO, I feel that you're only going to win out with decent, high quality content that's marketing organically.



**Erno Horvath**

January 22, 2014 at 4:13 am

I understand Google's pursuit against guest blogging & guest posting. This is the new 'spam' technique after Panda & Penguin updates. However I see many things to do beside this. There are still many more obvious violations out there most of them are used by really big companies, while these totally evident violations haven't been punished why you guys want to cracking down on the guest posting?

Please don't make me wrong, spinned articles, car mechanic articles on a health blog etc.. should be haunted down, but declare the guest post 'evil' is exaggeration.

Obviously you can't eliminate 100% of spam, but here are two, which are more and more obvious than guest blogging: (my comment may won't go through the filters because these, but please understand there is no other way to prove what I'm talking about)  
freessl.com = rapidssl.com (the main page is different, but the inner pages are exactly the same)  
<http://www.implant-cheveux.fr> (inner page contains white text on white background)

The problem is I got plenty examples for duplicated content like the one above. I don't want to say spammy guest posting is 'less evil' than duplicated content or white text on white background so please Google don't punish guest blogging.

Just I don't understand how the examples above can even exist in 2014, that's why I'm pretty sad 😞



**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 4:17 am

Your examples are irrelevant because they aren't spam...

I'd much rather Google focus on spammy and low quality junk on the web than deal with the likes of these examples you've provided.



**Erno Horvath**

January 22, 2014 at 5:53 am

What's the purpose of 'spam'? In my understanding to help a 'money

maker' website to rank better, not to rank the 'spam site' better (okay meanwhile the 'spam site' ranks better but this is just a by-product).

If we follow your conclusion for big companies it's totally allowed to have 3-4 domains with the same content but 'optimized' for different keywords? It has to be treated as spam too... or at least I think so 😊

**Geoff Jackson**

January 22, 2014 at 6:03 am

It's not technically correct, nor best practice, nor recommended to have websites with the same content. It doesn't make it spam though. Not all duplicate content is spam. They'll just find that their website's won't perform as well in search – they may even have canonicalisation from one domain pointing to the other domain (I haven't even looked at the site(s) in question).

Web spam is largely made up of low quality drivel on the web, article submission sites, guest blogging services, spammy blogs, all with artificial, mediocre to low quality or article spun content all about 500 words long, with one or two keyword rich anchor text backlinks in pointing to equally low quality websites.

No value to the user, no real audience, no following, not maintained, bare minimum etc etc.

**Syed Muzammil**

January 22, 2014 at 5:54 am

Google is doing his level best to force people investing more in PPC that's what I sense and after all Google is sitting to earn profit. They've tighten the circle for webmasters as guest posting seems to be the easiest technique for small business owners to get more exposure with branding but now I'm sure a severe action must be taken against guest bloggers in the upcoming Google update.

In simple words, Dear webmasters, you guys are earning through Google so you should pay the Google's percentage as well.

Nevertheless it's not a bad deal to give Thousands of dollars to Google if you earn Millions of dollars 😊

**Yiannis Gedeon**

January 22, 2014 at 6:12 am

If I may jump in, I think you miss the point. Matt says "I just want to highlight that a bunch of low-quality or spam sites have latched on to "guest blogging" as their link-building strategy, and we see a lot more spammy attempts to do guest blogging".

This is pretty clear to me...I land on the site, its a standard wordpress free theme site, with 20 blog posts having 10 anchor texts each. Nothing to see here, it should get devalued, full stop.

Now going back to quality guest blogging I think that Google dont have a problem with that but from your point of view you shouldn't care much about the link, rather that your article is posted on a blog/newsoutlet where people actually do read and comment on the articles. Then you have a chance to reply and enagage. Then you can connect through G+ or Twitter, then you can chat further and engage even further etc etc. You can see where am I taking this. Sounds like a hell of an effort. Well it should be. Before the internet you needed to do a lot of marketing only to be known in your local area, why online should be any different 😊

**Alex Miranda**

January 22, 2014 at 9:12 am

I do not get the fuss. I have been doing SEO since 1998. I have never ever advised my clients to guest blog because of the very same reason Matt pointed out. The problem is there are way too many newbies who have jumped on the band wagon the last few years and are practicing everything they read. I stand by my principles. No guest blogging, zero submissions to hundreds of directories, zero link building campaigns (let them come natural) and at the end of the day...my clients have never been penalized and are not only ranking on top of Google for multiple keywords but are generating tons of relevant traffic from their desired target market.

I know many will say "Impossible" If you follow the rules and do your SEO the right way, you will rank. Check for yourself. Search "Crown Rewards Card" This is a Hallmark card. After Hallmark itself look at the New City Hallmark ranking right below it. Check their site. 2 backlinks. Here is another... "residential knife sharpening" or "commercial knife sharpening NYC" 8 backlinks all natural, zero guest blogging, zero directory submissions. I rest my case.

**Michael LaRocca**

January 22, 2014 at 10:24 am

Great article, Matt. Will you write a guest post for my blog? Kidding!

The whole point of why we can't have nice things in the SEO space has resonated with me for years. You might be preaching to the converted here, but we like hearing it, so tell it all brother.

**Nick Ker**

January 22, 2014 at 11:22 am

The sooner overzealous internet marketers learn to moderate their behavior, the better. If they can't, then take their toys away.

For those complaining about not being able to guest blog in massive amounts – nothing is stopping you. Just don't expect to rank better as a result of the links in your posts.

Guest blogging is in fact a good way to reach a wider audience and get your message out there. But like many things, it has been overdone to the point of being a nuisance. Some sites are mostly guest posts where most of them are total crap. Even some well known sites routinely accept guest posts from what are essentially link exchange networks – panels of experts who get quoted in thin articles with links to their sites. So they have these junk articles that are full of mediocre business advice, and about a half dozen links to members of some group or another. Do those "experts" deserve an endorsement from major business publications? Probably not, but the club they belong to has made arrangements for this to continue.

**Adam**

January 22, 2014 at 4:49 pm

Warrior Forum says you're an ignorant troll who doesn't understand marketing the way the Experts do.

**Manoj**

January 22, 2014 at 6:50 pm

Matt,

What if the guest blogger/ contributor is a genuine contributor of good content that is highly relevant to the website on which the content is being published? Shouldn't the quality of the content and the relevance of where it is being published be the yardstick to determine whether something is spammy or not?

**Mathew Bruce**

January 23, 2014 at 1:26 am

I am not sure whether Matt would at least read my comment, article syndication is also devalued and now Guest post. Does this have anything to do with blogging and press releases?

**Alok Vats**

January 23, 2014 at 1:31 am

Hey Matt,

Agrees with your post on guest blogging, the only thing which I can say for this is posting genuine and quality articles as a guest blogger might not be bad.

But yes, I just wanted to know about sites which ask us for paying a certain amount to become a guest blogger over there... Will Google ever consider them for spamming purpose?

**Peter**

January 23, 2014 at 7:30 am

Matt,

You show examples of bad links, all the time! Can't you show examples of good links for a change? 😊

When I check backlinks of sites it's always like this: 99% are backlinks I call: Standard Backlinks which are from sites that have as their main purpose to list sites. Ofcourse they all have a special focus, but the majority of backlinks are always of the same (types of) sites.

If you remove all backlinks that are the standard backlinks and remove all that are in the "grey" area, then what are you left with?

When you talk about good links, it's always with sites for which it makes sense to get links. But what about companies that sell products or services that aren't of the type that anyone would just link to?

Can you show examples of good backlinks and how they were obtained? (the how part is more important than showing the good links)

**Geoff Jackson**

January 23, 2014 at 7:42 am

That's because the majority of the web are specifically going out looking for links... Just like you are.

Publish something on your website that people want to know about and that is useful and you'll gain traffic from it via the long-tail and people will link to it.

**Tanya Klien**

January 23, 2014 at 9:35 am

Hi Matt,

Its very sad that this hat come to where we are. We should be taking about the future not about guest spamming. And where Google is going what users don't need to do in 2014. Guest Spamming is not the way be real give your users the real deal.

Thanks,

Tanya!

**Serhat Pala**

January 23, 2014 at 9:42 am

This is good news for real businesses, real websites that are using guest blogging for the right reasons. I don't agree with some of the comments up about "Why would you need a guest blog, if not for the link and SEO". There are many reasons why your business can get benefit from publishing guest blogs on other Websites. Such as:

- You target the same demographics viewership, and want to get exposure to your blog, and your website
- You want to bring 'expert matters' on the subjects or interest areas your blog covers. It is better to have someone who knows what they are talking about, and give your readers valuable information
- You want to establish good relations with the blog owner by providing guest blogs. (i.e. You might want to have the blog owner be a judge on a contest you run, You might be the reseller of the brand that blog is about etc..)

I can keep writing many more reasons for why you can write guest blog on a different site, or you would want guest bloggers on your blog. So let's keep that in mind please...

I don't agree that those guest posts should be No Index / No Follow just so that they don't look spammy. I am not sure what most of you think about that.

**Derek Hobson**

January 23, 2014 at 11:02 am

Excellent!

I can't tell you how sick I am of "Mad Lib" guest blog requests.

**Andrew Healey**

January 23, 2014 at 1:10 pm

I guess with the huge impact of Google, we tend to forget the SEO isn't the be-all-and-end-all. As Matt said, there were plenty of good reasons for guest blogging before Google came along.

**Kidal**

January 23, 2014 at 4:44 pm

I think Matt Cutts is right to fight against bad blogs publishing posts that contain links which usually follow spammy patterns like, let's say... "best insurance New York" or "cheap flights UK", "India packages", "best dentist Anchorage" etc...

But I totally disagree with putting all eggs in one single basket and penalize all guest posting blogs while some of them are really high quality even though nobody actually prohibits link building back to those blogs. The bad quality and unnatural links from the blog posts must be the main criteria for any penalty if any, of course the blog must use white hat link building strategies as well.

**AIkeda**

January 24, 2014 at 3:05 am

Can I ask a simple question, Dear Matt?

What about a case when:

A site brings some really good contents.

The site is not very big.

The site does not send lot of advertising mails like "make you rich quickly" (Note at the

bottom).

The site does not even have time or resources to build any backlinks by "even" a good content marketing campaign or campaigns.

So the bottom line is that content is good but the site can not have all the so called white hat "SEO" tactics, forget the Black hat ones.

Do you have something to accommodate that and give it the weight what it might deserve?

Notes:

\* Investopedia kinds of sites sends number of such emails and they are considered as an authority when you see Google results.

There are so many pages on Wikipedia where the information is wrong and Wikipedia also recognizes that by saying that "this article needs improvement" or "it is bad" but still the page comes at the top.

Who brought this link thing into the picture first? And then who brought nofollow in the picture? And even if there are billion or even trillions of webpages, who will really give a link which is not nofollow to you... everyone is trying to save their skin.

No contradictions in the logics?

Authority can be bought and that is the way. Sara Blakely did not become what she was till she could sell the idea by whatever means to Neiman-Marcus and that depended on that day's situation. There may be many more Sara Blakely's or good sites for that matter but if your logic is just as simple (even if you keep changing it drastically but in very simple ways) then you are not really trying to find good contents... rather you are just focusing on "Getting Rid" of the possible good content.

You may have to really revisit what is authority AND IF ONLY AUTHORITY COUNTS and CAST SYSTEM has to be believed.



### Dean Saliba

January 24, 2014 at 4:38 am

I've been following your videos for a while, but this is the first time that I've actually visited your blog, I must do it more often because you clearly go into more detail than you do on your videos (I guess you have a short time frame with the videos).

Personally my eyes were open to the possibility of people submitting low quality guest posts to my blogs in order to build backlinks to dodgy and spammy sites from day one, which is why I put in place rules which I refused to back down over:

- Nofollow Links - I found that not making the links dofollow immediately pushed the low quality posters and spammy link-builders away.
- Read ALL Guest Posts Myself - You might be surprised by the amount of blogs who publish guest posts WITHOUT reading them, or they pass the job to someone else who doesn't really pay too much attention.
- Only Relevant Links - I only accept guest posts that have links to sites or products that are related to the topics I cover on my blogs. I have had to decline quite a few well written blog posts over the years because the links are completely off-niche.

I'm sure someone with your expertise could pick holes in my little list of rules, but I find that they have seen me well so far. 😊



### mirco simoncinio

January 24, 2014 at 9:03 am

you do not specify the automatic penalties in to the web master tools. A small big help to adwords.

I do not know what I was penalized and disavow is just an effective palliative



**mirco simoncinio**

January 24, 2014 at 9:05 am

you should report the penalties specifying the reason



**mirco simoncinio**

January 24, 2014 at 9:11 am

I'm penalized on keywords and do not know why, your spam filters are not working in fits and starts and credible because there are those who develop plugins for wordpress or Joomla and insert anchor text in page width do follow and are first in the serp..... incredible. and you think to the post on the blog. it is right what you say, but do not apply to other sectors such plugin.



**mirco simoncinio**

January 24, 2014 at 9:14 am

sorry "first in the serp"



**AIkeda**

January 24, 2014 at 7:32 pm

Sorry that I missed mentioning in my previous comment but what about the authority sites like Yahoo which may be giving a bunch of back links to some specific sites.... Yahoo Finance for example. You may find 10 links to a site with a 10 sentence content. Both do well. Capitalism is ok but we expect better from Google as a search engine leader.



**Anil Anvesh**

January 24, 2014 at 10:12 pm

I see many guys are using Guest blogging for just link building. I rejected almost 90% guest blogging proposal because they lack quality content.



**Jay Rodriguez**

January 25, 2014 at 12:15 am

Hey Matt, Thanks for the update. Sometimes its hard for us to keep up with all the changes in algorithms, search terms, keywords and all that other stuff. Now guest blogging.... Back to the drawing board guys & Gals!



**sem seo**

January 25, 2014 at 7:17 am

- 1) the algorithmic penalties are not resolved by disavow.
- 2) with no manual penalty is not possible to reconsider a site.

how think to solve this problem?  
must a domain be penalized forever?  
mister Cutts thanks for your answer.



**Crista**

January 25, 2014 at 11:54 am

OMG thank you for writing this! I got the same e-mail..... I'm glad you saved me the time it would have taken to research the company the sent it. DELETE!!! NO thanks!!!

**Lasisi Afees**

January 26, 2014 at 7:02 am

Hi matt,

Thanks for sharing this info. It doesn't come to me as a surprise anyway. Guest post remains the easy hard way to get dofollow links to new websites.

My concern, however is the way things are going - it seems as Google doesn't want to give room for the credible starters. With all these updates, which site will give out dofollow links to even quality contents.

Any other feasible ways to get better pagerank aside from dofollow links from authority pages? Does Google authorrank really add value to Pagerank?

Thanks

**Carol**

January 26, 2014 at 12:11 pm

Just when I was going to start guest posting. Argggghhh. On the plus side, I read this BEFORE I guest posted anywhere. Now I'll go lie down instead.

**Reuben Oyeyele**

January 26, 2014 at 2:06 pm

Now I can guess why my blog nose-dived in Google search results. Since my mother tongue is not English I was too happy when English speaking webmasters contacted me to put their posts on my blog. For over 6 months I accepted guest postings then I realized that my blog was not doing well as it used to do.

I found out (Webmaster tools) a lot of spammy links to guest posts which I didn't do. I contacted the posters but no response so I had to disavow the links. even had to delete certain posts and eventually stopped taking guest posts altogether.

What I am trying to say is that some legitimate and **"Google's law abiding" "web citizens"** may be punished for non-intention.

As with everything else in life, a few people pay for the mistake of others even if they do not have anything to do with it.

I believe Google's engineers can come up with something to distinguish the legitimate intentions.

BTW: Thanks for the post and the videos. I guess this is a lesson I will have to learn for future references.

**Thad James**

January 27, 2014 at 7:02 am

I appreciate your article. I agree with the point about not accepting unknown sources as guest bloggers. That isn't a good practice regardless of the "linking" possibilities. Always be on the lookout for spammers and cheats. They will always corrupt every new method of social/electronic media. If you accept a guest blogger, know who they are.

**mirco simoncinio**

January 27, 2014 at 7:59 am

Not to be confused, many times it happens to participate in discussions on sites which then become spam.....What do you do?

**Mirco Simoncinio**

January 27, 2014 at 8:04 am

do not forget those agencies that only have links in the footer of the sites they produce. is a good link building? or is spam?

**Innovative Infotech**

January 27, 2014 at 12:16 pm

Matt,

Thanks for updating our knowledge. You guys are doing fantastic job. We are also following your tips to optimize our site. Can you please write article regarding google adsense. I am waiting for your tips in that article.

**Paul Lovell**

January 27, 2014 at 1:06 pm

Some of the comment above are just great.

But I think some people have forgot that all Google is trying todo is show better results for the user and not allow website owners to cheat the system by gaining links in the masses from places of no real value

Good job Google crack on

**Donovan**

January 27, 2014 at 1:22 pm

*But I think some people have forgot that all Google is trying todo is show better results for the user and not allow website owners to cheat the system by gaining links in the masses from places of no real value*

@paul If that was the case Google would be all over spam reports, and they're not. They ask us to report spam and rarely (once for me) have I seen immediate action. I reported a huge link farm last year and because Google doesn't allow you to report link farms you have to report it one website at a time... The link farm I reported stayed in the search results for almost a year and it's only now that 48 of their sites are now delisted. This link farm belonged to one company that had their sites (76 sites) ranked for every keyword in their local market or most prominent ones. The majority of the sites were just doorway pages, single page sites that linked to all of their other sites and Google still didn't remove those for close to a year after the first spam report was submitted. This year they built just about as many as they did the following year and have a Pakistan company getting links from .edu, .gov and now their sites cover every page to page 8 of the search results.

There should be a way to report link farms other then the web spam report tool that only allows you to list the one to one relationships.

**Greg**

January 27, 2014 at 4:36 pm

I think in general this is a positive thing. I would also like to express apologies for previous posts (I was in a bad place), I think this does even the playing field a little bit.

**Paul Mackenzie Ross**



January 28, 2014 at 3:37 am

Matt, thank you for clearing up this matter, it's really useful.

However, one thing I feel I must say, Matt, is what is your view on the fact that probably the vast majority of approaches for guest posting (and the lowest quality pieces, in my opinion) actually originate from gmail accounts?



**Geoff McDonald**

January 29, 2014 at 2:15 am

Thanks Matt! Great article. I've been thinking about the spammy emails I've been getting for guest posts. I made up a rule to explain it: The Law of Email Entropy – That every email and SEO strategy naturally and eventually leads to spam. Human nature will always look for a short cut!



**Mirza Sharz**

January 29, 2014 at 12:17 pm

OK Matts, I am glad to know this useful information



**Makenzie Hardy**

January 29, 2014 at 12:52 pm

Thank you! I am so sick of spammers reaching out through our "Contact Us" page wanting to be guest bloggers. I think they are all spam, no matter how legit or "established" they make themselves seem. Great post, death to guest blogging.



**Russell DeMott**

January 30, 2014 at 8:29 am

I agree with the frustration expressed by Matt in the post. I get solicited by guest bloggers almost daily. I ignore almost all the requests. I do, once in a while, allow guest posts but only from those who can meaningfully contribute to my blog—a blog about bankruptcy law.

The core problem from Google's standpoint is that no matter how good the algorithm gets, it's never will be as good as a human being looking at a site. More human auditing would a more constructive solution. That, coupled with some penalty for running a spammy site accepting poor content from guest bloggers, would be better than painting with this broad brush. The response to this is likely to be, "there are too many sites; it's not possible." But that's the whole point of auditing. It's random and only picks a few subjects to audit. And it works fairly well. Think of the IRS, for example. Sure, I probably won't get caught, but if I do...ouch. Relying too much on the algorithm to ferret out spam reminds me of the painful problems many of us have had with our Google Places pages. Phone numbers changed, addresses changed, etc. with no attempt by Google to verify these changes with the owner. (I really do know my address and phone number better than some bot crawling around other sites and reporting misc info about my number and address!) Net/net, there's never a substitute for human oversight.



**Dom Casas**

January 30, 2014 at 11:29 pm

Never tried guest blogging and I have not and will never ever recommend it to any my clients. For some reason guest blogging is good since its overrated it turned to be another business services offered by MOST internet marketers and SEO's.

It's best to regulate guest blogging to fulfill its "true purpose" not to "please businesses".



**Stuart Mackey**

January 31, 2014 at 10:00 am

Thank you for this helpful article. And I thought it was very clear that you were talking about SEO and not just guest blogging in general. But I am glad to see you clarify it in the title and the addendum.

**Liz**

February 1, 2014 at 9:56 am

I think this is brilliant. The spammy-ness of guest blogging needed to be pointed out, and *maybe* it'll stop those annoying emails I get all the time in my inbox. >.>

However, it may be worth pointing that people are taking ~~this post~~ your first sentence and running with it — “Matt Cutts says we shouldn’t guest post anymore”, “Matt Cutts on ‘Guest blogging is dead’”, etc. I read your post hours ago after finding it by chance, and then signed onto a few networks I’m on where I saw (and keep seeing) people freak out over it being dead.

-. I wish people would stop trying to link build so much and just enjoy it. (Enjoying it works for me, anyway.)

**Michele Steele**

February 1, 2014 at 2:31 pm

I get those annoying emails as well about some “expert” wanting to post an article on my blog. It is a shame that good things like guest blogging get ruin by some dummies just trying to make a quick buck (Not hating on people trying to make legit money, just on those that do so by using bad tactics).

**Garrett O'Brien**

February 3, 2014 at 6:09 pm

Like any blog, we have had our share of requests for guest posts. Being a niche site on HRIS (Human Resource Information Systems), we have found only a few that can meet our challenge of remaining on topic. We do limit outside links to ONE in the article while their bio can go to anything they themselves manage (twitter, LinkedIn, etc)... We have been able to grow our blog from 2000 to 40,000+ a month in less than 2 years by be careful (we do have a mix of email accounts of our writers with private, gmail, yahoo, or otherwise). We have been fortunate enough to be keep things clean enough that neither Panda nor Penguin affected us (yeah!), so we have something to pat ourselves on the back about...

Like Google’s stance, we won’t print something for the sake of printing something — we have too many decision makers in our audience (managers on up, with half of them being C-levels)... We ALWAYS ask, “Will the majority of our audience appreciate publishing this? If not, is there value for the minority that will?” We have published how-to posts on weekends on blogging, selecting wine, what to do about traveling safely — all off topic — but yet relevant enough to many in our audience.

As usually, the 20% is doing the damage to the 80% enough to have to make a call — but as long as we have the 1st amendment, that is something we are going to have to deal with as well. 😊

**Dorin**

February 4, 2014 at 5:55 am

What Matt is saying is simple:

Don’t use guest blogging to gain a backlink. Guest blog when you have something valuable to say about a topic and accept a guest blog for the same reason. To avoid problems, use nofollow links if you really want to link somewhere.

**Nigel Minchin**

February 4, 2014 at 8:43 am

Hi Matt

I was waiting for this. I agree, we get approached weekly or even daily for the offer of guest posts for our website. Increasing this is from SEO companies trying to build links for their clients. We have accepted some posts from people we know in our industry, where it is informative for our readers/clients and well written. The increased frequency of requests was clearly an indicator that was now becoming an SEO tool. The bubble is bursting...

Nigel



**Fabio**

February 4, 2014 at 9:34 am

Gee, if only we could markup authorship in a way that was mutually beneficial for search engines, site owners, and authors of high quality content....



**Byron Warnken**

February 4, 2014 at 9:36 am

It's a bit of a sad state of affairs, and perhaps an indication of too much Google power, that we simply have to accept this as fact and change perfectly legitimate practices. A "guest post" – something formerly known as an op-ed, a column, or, like you said, a book introduction, is WAY legit. Just because your technology isn't keeping up isn't my problem. But now you have made it my problem.

Ultimately, in my search marketing efforts, I finally embraced what you had said all along – Don't really pay attention to us. Put out great content and you win. And I have.

But now, I need to put out great content and make sure to change default settings (nofollow vs. follow) in order to make sure I haven't violated Google's terms.

Keep working big G. I need you to be better. And because you own an obscene amount of the world's Internet traffic, we all need you to be better. I value – tremendously – what you have brought to this world. But do not forget Voltaire: "With great power comes great responsibility."



**Jonathan Hatton**

February 4, 2014 at 10:25 am

Seen a lot of blog posts saying "Guest Blogging isn't dead" etc. Will be very interesting to see how many sites doing guest blogging will be manually penalized.



**Victor Tribunsky**

February 4, 2014 at 10:37 am

Probably, in this situation, the only one right decision will be to write all posts of your blog yourself.



**Rob Honig**

February 4, 2014 at 11:19 am

It's a tactic used for some years. You also have the people who want to modify original articles and add some content with their links in it. It's the same story like paid links. As long as people can earn some bucks without adding anything usefull to the web it will exist.

Grtz



**Matt Mattus**

February 4, 2014 at 12:20 pm

Hi Matt

I (one of the few, I guess) am thrilled that Google is taking this action. As a blogger for a rather influential, yet small specialty-subject blog about plants, I have always felt that if one writes a blog, especially a specialty blog, it should be written by ones self, and no one else. A blog based on ones own expertise and knowledge should not need guest bloggers. I always felt funny about even considering a request from a 'guest blogger'. If I was an designer, why would I allow someone to 'guest design' for me? If I was a musician, why would I accept another musician to guest perform under my name? Blogs, in my opinion, are personal expressions, where we share our ideas, our talent our thoughts, or our lives and what we do. The notion that one could or should strategically try to fool search engines, or that one even has the 'right' to, sounds as ridiculous as junk mail to me.



**Chuka Udeze**

February 4, 2014 at 1:59 pm

Guest Posting isn't really dead but Guest posting for the sole purpose of SEO is if I understand what Matt is saying here correctly: the sole purpose of guest posting shouldn't be about producing tons of low quality content just for SEO or backlinks, if you have something valuable to say or write about on a particular subject matter on a website that isn't yours and they allow such contributions, I think it makes sense to do so once in a while but not abusing that privilege for the purpose of backlinks



**Souri Sengdara**

February 4, 2014 at 6:11 pm

Thanks for this. I am a new blogger ... just started and had now one guest post of a friend. I started getting lots of emails offering anything from 10\$ to 400\$ for a link (wow ...400\$ is a lot of money for me ...).

I rejected them all so far as it was mainly spammy stuff such online gambling and pharmacy ... ahhh ... nothing I want my blog be related with. My blog still ranks pretty bad even if I write unique content and only post my own photos. (as it is a photo blog).

But I think your job is not an easy one ... 😊 Good luck fighting spam pages:

**I would have one little tip how to identify Spam which you might have not thought off:**

Hire SEO companies, buy fiver gigs, and so on ... of course not as google ... use a fake company name.

You will soon get lists of websites where your links appear and find them even via search. You also find other people who use the dodgy services. Derank them in one go. "Project Trojan Horse" ... you pretty much beat them with their own weapons. You just need to setup a few websites to promote and buy some links ... you will find them quickly after around 1 year.

(Hey ... come on this is an amazing idea ... )



**Benj Arriola**

February 4, 2014 at 10:55 pm

I Matt, I always value your advice. So I stuck a fork in it! <http://youtu.be/Pv9vBFYE80Y> 😊



**Jonathan Hatton**

February 5, 2014 at 7:02 am

what the hell have I just watched hahaha



**Benj Arriola**

February 5, 2014 at 9:40 am

LOL, glad you found it funny.

I just noticed my typo also on my comment. I said "I Matt" and meant to say "Hi Matt"



**Jonathan Hatton**

February 6, 2014 at 6:51 am

haha bet there was some funny out takes as well!



**Adam**

February 5, 2014 at 3:08 pm

Does KFC know you're misappropriating their plastic forks like that? That is blatant misuse of the plastic forks!



**Benj Arriola**

February 7, 2014 at 10:25 am

I forgot to add the disclaimer at the end. No forks were harmed in the creation of this video. 😊



**Altaf Gilani**

February 11, 2014 at 1:09 am

haha, that was funny... but I wonder, how the whole team was involved in Guest Blogging 😊 JK



**Chris Garduno**

February 5, 2014 at 3:38 pm

I figured this would happen eventually because guest blogging violates the core goals of Google, to rank sites based on actual authority and trust, not manufactured authority. Guest blogging is just a twisted version of "paid links that pass PR".



**Brent**

February 7, 2014 at 4:07 pm

Nothing wrong with guest blogging as long as you're genuinely wanting to share your expertise with another blog's audience. I just don't like how other people overdo it and try to make a living out of it, offering to outreach to other bloggers and get posts with links to your site published for \$50-100 each smh.



**Fran**

February 9, 2014 at 11:58 am

Matt, you are right. When a person like me with low stats, blogging for friends and family gets requests to do a guest post because of my "wonderful blog" then you know the request is suspect. Fran



**Dan Hartnett**

February 10, 2014 at 12:16 pm

As a small business owner, I understand why guest blogging can be seen as spam. I worked with an SEO agency, one that I trusted. It turns out they lied to me... they used techniques like this to help with my organic rankings. Last September my website was hit with a manual penalty. The agency, as far as I can see, experienced no negative repercussions. I'm now working with an ethical, White Hat SEO firm. They are helping me fix the problems. We use AdWords to fill the gap in addition to working on disallowing the spammy links built by

the previous agency. We're not ready to send in a reconsideration request. However, the lack of organic visibility is killing my business. As a business owner, understanding SEO and Google quality guidelines is not in my skillset (as I'm sure many other business owners are in the same boat). Is there anything I do to fix this problem sooner as it's killing my business?

**Gautham**

February 11, 2014 at 1:35 am

Hi Matt, Probably the facts in content marketing going down. I see to many results in Google that are totally violating the ethic guidelines. Even the basic seo is done wrong like too many characters in Title Tag, using frames. Move ahead, if all the mash up for link building has undergone the quality guideline cumbersome; then what is the next step to get good ranking...

**Nishant**

February 12, 2014 at 12:19 am

Hey Matt,

I understand that people people make use of guest blogging for spamming purposes. I personally feel that those people(though in small number) who don't really use this tactic for benefit purposes have to suffer? Can't there be any such strategy that only spammers are affected not the genuine people?

**Mike Wood**

February 12, 2014 at 11:54 am

"offering money to get links that pass PageRank"

Not sure where I see that in the email that you received. I get many of these emails and usually ignore them, but I am not sure how you would call providing content to a website in exchange for a backlink "offering money" or a violation of Google policy. I have also had several emails from people asking me about this article (great job as you are ranking rather high with it). I think many people are misunderstanding your point of this article. Basically, guest blogging is not dead nor will it ever be, but hanging out with "link farms" and posting to websites with the sole purpose of establishing a backlink and driving PPC traffic is not advisable.

**David Boozer**

February 12, 2014 at 5:55 pm

Thanks for the info Matt... I have done a little guest blogging in the past, but for branding purposes only. Great piece as always! Thanks. =)

**Dorrn Shapow**

February 15, 2014 at 11:18 pm

Its amazing that people hijack ethical techniques and make them seem suspicious. Its always the rotten apples that seem to ruin the whole bushel. I too am getting impatient with reading blog articles full of anchor text and links not to mention ridiculous pop ups and calls to action.

When will people get it! if your content blog, article, website, press release, guest post is quality enough maybe people will want to share and talk about it?

I think there is only two reasons for having a link in my clients or my own personal articles. Reference to a study that is current, relevant and accurate or additional information also current, relevant and accurate.

Its seems everyone these days is an SEO expert including clients regurgitating data, trends, analytics, statistics and studies on some specific metric or signal. Does any of that really matter?

In my opinion, no way no how, I'm thinking of changing my job title from Organic Seo Professional to Website Quality Control specialist. Quality got me to where I am today. Quality got me top page positions with no back linking strategy, guest posting or any new trend in leveraging the SERP in my favor. Glad you dedicated a post on this subject, I will definitely share the knowledge.

**Chris Hirst**

February 17, 2014 at 7:08 am

The SEO "experts" could be compared to a swarm of locusts, they [locusts] find a nice green field of crops, swarm on it and gorge until it is bare, then move on. Which is just what the "experts" have done with 'guest' blogging for links, blog commenting for links, forum posting for links and so on. Is it really too much to ask that they "get a clue" and stop killing the things that rational people use to get their name 'known' in the society or circle of expertise they are in?

**Timothy Stone**

February 17, 2014 at 4:28 pm

Being new to blogging (yeah I know it's 2014) and commenting, I'm concerned that it would detract from my website if I continue to comment. While I could care less if it is follow or no-follow, I want to continue leaving comments on blogs that are in my industry just for the sake of branding, reputation and allowing people to find me via my website or blog. Is this going to hurt me in the long run or should I just not worry about it?

**PrIyAnGsHu**

February 18, 2014 at 9:18 am

Thanks for this post Matt, finally cleared up the trending doubt in the SEO world. I've too been engaged in some guest blogging campaigns lately but just for branding, and that too from high authority sites of relevant niche. Natural backlinks is the way to go now.

**Anna Oggel**

February 19, 2014 at 9:30 am

Hi Matt, you can honestly answer a simple question?  
What is the best method of optimizing a web site?

1. On page SEO
2. Social Media
3. Off Page SEO

I ask this because I'm completely confused when the **Master Google** keeps changing indexing algorithms.

Thanks

**Matt D**

February 21, 2014 at 4:22 pm

Hey Matt,

A little late to the convo, but better late than never. I am brand new to the SEO game, and I wanted to share my experience with you as a complete newbie so that you know what it's like for a new, legitimate site trying to start out. You eat, sleep and breathe Google, so I know that you see things a lot differently than I do, and your interests are very different than mine as well. I also know the invaluable insight that can be gleaned from listening to the direct user experience of a customer (I am a Google customer, consumer and affiliate, albeit a very small one). I hope that what I have to say will be listened to on some level.

First and foremost, I love Google. Your mission of eliminating spam and bringing your users the most valuable and relevant information is an honorable one, and yes a very challenging one as well. Searching for something and having legitimate resources drowned by irrelevant content is frustrating to say the least, so there's no argument about what you are doing. I

know that Google holds the power and we are all coming to you, not the other way around, so I also understand your position of "it's our search engine, we'll rank pages as we see fit". No arguments there either, you've earned that right. The problem that I have is how you're filtering the spam.

As I said, I am very new to SEO, so I look to search results to provide me with information on the best techniques to make my site a good resource to others and how to get it out there. There is a TON of information available, and everyone has an opinion, often clashing or not supported by verifiable research or study. After familiarizing myself and playing catch up, I now view SEO in three phases: Pre Panda, Post Panda and Post Penguin. I have learned to discredit any information prior to Penguin as it is now 90% irrelevant and those techniques that were once useful are now harmful to my site. I have spent countless hours (days, weeks, months) researching what to do. I have given up on "hot tips", "secrets" and "tricks", as Google has now made all of them punishable (or banishable) offenses. So where does one go to learn how to get their legitimate website ranked, or even indexed, when even the "authority" sites don't know what's going on and are publishing contradicting information?

Just to provide some background, I have a good degree from a good school, I've held good jobs with good companies, and I have integrity and the willingness to share and help others. I create quality content based off of careful research and aim to provide as much unique and informative content as I can. I am far from a spammer. The trouble is, I can't seem to even get Google to look at my site to index it because of all the new measures. I understand I shouldn't pay to get backlinked to 1,000 questionable sites in hopes of getting my site crawled, but aside from submitting a site map and getting out there on social sites, there doesn't seem to be a good way to get seen. Sure I could write content for a year and hope I get crawled eventually, but if no one likes it then I'm out a year of work. In today's picky internet environment, you need to be able to get your feet wet and test the waters first before jumping in (especially if you don't know how to swim in the SEO waters like me).

Let me refocus and get to my point. I can understand most of Google's practices and the need to put its \$326 Billion foot down on certain practices, but it was discovering this article that made me feel like I had to emerge from the reading shadows and say something. I saw guest posting as an excellent way to build authority and reputable backlinks within a certain community. It's a way to bring together respected and knowledgeable leaders to share ideas and cross pollinate a network with quality information. Yes, this is a good way to rank better, so people are going to find ways to abuse this. But to hear you declare guest posting as dead was a huge slap in the face. But it didn't make me mad. It was more of a hopeless sadness that made me fear the future of the internet will belong to only those that are big, established and already liked by Google. If I am an expert in my field, just starting out with my new website, and I want to share my knowledge with another expert on their site, I could actually be punished?? In my small and humble opinion, this is going too far.

Here's what I really wanted to share, and I apologize for going off in a few directions. Like I said before, I agree 100% that the internet needs to be cleaned up (or at least the way we search through it), and I applaud Google for taking the initiative. However, I am STRONGLY opposed to the blanket of punitive judgment that is being cast over certain practices. Don't punish the whole class because of the bad students in the back. Put those bad apples in the hall and let the rest of the class continue in its quest of integrity and knowledge. Disallow sites that use bad practices from being seen in the SERPs, but don't banish them, because you're catching too many dolphins in the tuna net (apologies to tuna enthusiasts, or to dolphin haters). Now I don't know how to change the algorithms, and I know it isn't an easy task, but something needs to change so that we can continue to spread new and exciting ideas. Not everyone can put content out there for months waiting until Google let's others see them in searches.

One last thing I forgot to get back to earlier. I searched Google for "are there any backlinks Google likes" (I did not use quotes in my search). What I found was the exact opposite of what I was looking for. Every link on the first page was to the effect of "what Google doesn't like", "what you'll get penalized for", and "don't do this". That's all I am ever able to find. Earlier I mentioned the need for clear and reputable information from authority sites. Well, Google, you're the highest authority on yourself, so please help us out. Please make the switch from "don't do this or we'll slap you" to "do this and we'll be friends".

I understand you can't say "use X directory" because everyone will flood them, but certain sites should be OK now. The internet community is changing its ways to conform to your rules. For example, Ezine Articles manually checks all articles before submission to ensure quality content. Shouldn't that be allowed if we have good information that will be helpful to people and it's being checked marked as quality content? Now that the proper measures are being put in place, can't we go back and use these resources as Google would have originally intended? (maybe Ezine isn't the best example, but I think you understand my

point). And I already ranted about the guest blogging so I'll leave that alone.

So that's basically the gist of it, and though I could go on for days, I think I've said enough. I want Google to be my friend rather than a big scary monster that scares quality content off of the internet. You've convinced us (over and over again) that quality content is king, and no one is arguing that. And we get it. Now let's just find a way to loosen the reigns and let that quality content roam free. Target the spammers and scammers with a sniper rifle, not with the net that catches all of us. Thank you for listening to one of the little guys.

**Sudhir Singh**

February 21, 2014 at 11:17 pm

Hi Matt, Your article is much appreciated. I would like to believe that yes guest blogging does have its share of spammers but then which trade doesn't? Everywhere you go, you will find some negatives and some positives. The only thing that can happen to keep things ideally peaceful is a BALANCE between the two and that is where the role of targeted bloggers comes into picture. They need to understand this and curb the practice. Adding to that, your article plays a great role in creating awareness about the same. Kudos to that! 😊

**Miraj Gazi**

February 22, 2014 at 12:19 pm

Thanks Matt for your valuable advice. I got it – Don't spam and add value 😊

**SEO Tribune**

February 27, 2014 at 10:30 am

This right here sums it up:

"In general I wouldn't recommend accepting a guest blog post unless you are willing to vouch for someone personally or know them well."

We are a new blog focusing on SEO and online marketing and have DOZENS of "authors" contact us daily wanting to be a contributor.

#1 – If they have poor grammar in their "pitch" to you as why they would be such a good guest blogger – DELETE the email right away.

#2 – Check their past work samples – if they are just littered with promotional links and read like crap – then DELETE

Guest blogging will always exist. When done correctly it helps to gather a bunch of good minds in one place and share knowledge.

The days of "spammy" guest blogging are done – but when done as intended originally, it still provides a value.

**Frederick Gimino**

February 27, 2014 at 11:02 pm

Guest blogging definitely has its positive and negative aspects. One should weigh them thoroughly as a mistake in marketing practices and/or linking practices can be devastating to your site/brand.

Drawing upon the many mistakes, I made in the past with article marketing I personally hesitate to venture a toe into the guest blogging "pool" considering the current state of the internet. Moreover, I totally identify with Matt's statements regarding the blogger that felt validated by the posts she received. From my own unfortunate personal experience, I learned the hard way about Sybil attacks, and being targeted by others that seem genuine. Thanks, for the Google insight, and clarification on the current state of guest blogging Matt.

**Campbell McArthur**

February 28, 2014 at 1:42 am

So, basically in the end, the only links that will be OK are the ones from GOOGLE Right? Funny, you people preach LINKS are Bad LINKS are SPAM but what is GOOGLE'S main revenue source come from? SELLING LINKS!

GOOGLE made 33 BILLION Dollars last year. Where did the majority of that revenue come from Matt? Selling LINKS that's where! Geez, I thought paid links were bad?

Matt, you're a smart guy how is that you can actively participate in this nonsense and condone any of it when it is negatively impacting millions and millions of innocent people?

I'm sorry buddy but I did not see a democratic VOTE taken to the PEOPLE that deems GOOGLE be the supreme chancellor and dictator over the internet!

You people are killing small business in this country and there are MANY, MANY legitimate small business owners that do the right things and practice ethical white hat SEO who are severely impacted by this Bull Sh##t that you people claim is in efforts to stop SPAM... who are you kidding man? This is not about stopping SPAM it's about control, GREED and Power for the Wealthy Elite that GOOGLE was bank rolled by for their venture capitol.

If links are so bad then why is it that GOOGLE can sell all of the LINKS that they want and operate with complete impunity?

Thank you for listening and hopefully you find worth and merit in my words.

Sincerely,

Campbell McArthur

**Joe C.**

March 4, 2014 at 3:17 pm

Guest blogging, like other SEO tactics, and most things you do in life for that matter, is best done in moderation. This has always held true and will continue to into the future. Guest blogging can be beneficial in a SEO campaign, but only when it's done correctly. This means submitting quality guest posts that are unique and engaging, and only submitting to authoritative blogs that cover a subject similar or related to the one you're promoting. Doing this will allow you to build a good reputation and establish yourself as an expert in your industry.

Again, don't over do it! Some guest blogging is good but too much could be perceived as spam.

**Katie**

March 6, 2014 at 4:36 am

We were bombarded with such offers, sometimes they look very legit. Even i accepted few of these offers in the past since those guest posts looked too promising.

What should i do now? Should i go ahead and delete all of them?

**Thomas**

March 6, 2014 at 10:00 am

Matt, As someone who works for Google, you should know that most of people's searches for something they need tend to start with research and information-gathering – and most of that tends to start with websites that aren't actually owned by the particular brand who will eventually provide the customer that service or thing they want. Google just needs to get better at removing spam from its index, freeing people to find references and referrals to information they need from websites providing it. And that means \*any\* website, not just

the ones paying for advertising in AdWords.

I'm in marketing, and I've always rejected the spam/BS game. The fact is, 90% of my potential market are spending 90% of their initial time on sites I don't control. In much the same way that Google is beginning to build paid advertising platforms that provide "recommended" or related content on relevant sites, marketers like me often look to those relevant sites as a channel for organic or paid promotion of the brands we represent. Guest posts are one way for brands that aren't already huge, famous, or able to spend a gazillion dollars per year on marketing, to get their content onto the sites where their potential customers are gathering information.

It's up to Google to get rid of spam. It's \*NOT\* up to Google to decide which brands should be notable enough to be allowed to write guest posts somewhere. You guys better take this idea back to the drawing board, because at present it only seems focused on (once again) rewarding people with big names and bigger marketing budgets – using the same old excuse that those big bad blackhat gamers are spoiling "organic" search for everyone.

Google stopped being truly organic, years ago, and this had very little to do with blackhatters.

**Wally**

May 28, 2014 at 11:05 pm

@Thomas, that is one of the most accurate comments I've read in a long time. Bravo.

I'm really getting tired of adding '2014' to every search query I execute in order to hopefully filter out results from 2008 or 2009 (even 2005!) that consistently produce 404 pages. How can Google complain about guest blog posts when their index is out of date and leads to non-existent websites?

**Blaze Studios**

March 14, 2014 at 10:54 am

It's really too bad spammers have ruined this, because it should really be a good way to get quality content. Most times you have to pay for good writers, but if someone is willing to write a good article for just a link to their site, it really seems like fair exchange to me.

It might be a good strategy to just link guest blogs to the users google plus profile as the author so they personally build up authority. What do you think?

**Edan Barak**

March 18, 2014 at 12:51 pm

This is a great, and long-awaited move by Google. I don't think guest posting is inherently bad, but the way it's currently being abused to gain unnatural links has got to stop. As long as links in guest posts are no-followed, and are done mainly as a form of old-school marketing and to actively contribute to the community, there should be no problem.

Definite +1!

**Russell Wilson**

March 18, 2014 at 1:06 pm

I understand the need for a Google spam fighting team. I guess from an everyday user it is kind of difficult to understand why Google may pay so much attention to a particular deviation of search but from an seo perspective it's necessary. With people knowing how to trick the search engines into showing only their sites, well then that's kind of like "people running the world"... no "government"... the web world is a virtual reality where websites are like huts, condo's, apartments, and mansions. Every reality has to have some form of "rule" or government. So think of "google spam" as the government of the most popular search engine, allowing businesses to become millionaires in the stock "keyword stock" or simple

mom and pop small business owners who enjoy simply making a living off direct search.

**Chrissy Morin**

March 19, 2014 at 7:44 am

Best quote of the day... "Ultimately, this is why we can't have nice things in the SEO space" I get these emails every day offering "Unique Content" for my websites.. about a small town in Colorado from CHINA.. um no! stop emailing me!! I've even responded once in awhile if it looks as if they might be legitimate and send them the links to the Google Guidelines and they respond they don't think it violates them.. hello!

**Mark Fillmore**

March 19, 2014 at 9:41 am

Hi Matt,

Thanks for the update, not entirely surprising. Apologies if you already answered this but I'm pretty sure you haven't. You mention that nofollowed links within a guest blog would be alright – does that mean you'd recommend nofollowing branded anchor text links as well?

P.S. This literally brought a tear to my eyes: "Ultimately, this is why we can't have nice things in the SEO space..."

**Will Spencer**

March 19, 2014 at 10:37 am

Matt:

When you're done cleaning up guest blogging, can you try to do something about linkbait and viral media spam?

I stopped using Google for searching because of the low quality of search results.

**Criss Derek**

March 19, 2014 at 12:54 pm

@mattcutts What you exactly want? Why do you think its network? This is a platform where people come and take only relevant posts.

Is this also spam? Or do you completely want to close guest blogging? And want to divert peoples mind towards adsense? Why you are not making your stand clear?

Myguestblog is platform where site owners and writers who want to publish their posts come together...and that's all run without any money transactions. And at least with 90% relevancy we can see on this platform. Then what's the point to penalized it?

Seems like google don't want organic SEO world now. They just want bloody money through their adwords. Really sad Google- days are very near when facebook will cover the Google market. Example – they have started paid sponsored advertisement.

You should answer this clearly..

**Jason Canon**

March 20, 2014 at 9:47 am

Matt,

I understand that your goal with this move is to "clean up" guest blogging from spam but IMNSHO this approach throws out the baby with the bathwater! I run a technology information website and am being hit by a daily stream of people, whose articles I previously screened for value and decided to publish, who are now requesting that I remove

any backlinks to their site.

It appears to me that Google has the lions share of responsibility for this "problem" because Google originally decided to use backlinks in a manner that was unintended by the technology developers. In the process, Google is not only violating its own "do no harm" policies but it is engaging in a practice that is harmful to free speech.

Links, or backlinks, were created for the purpose of adding value "benefit" to the end user. With backlinks no longer did the end user have to do subsequent searches to find related information; authors could build in links that made it easy to find additional info. Google "perverted" this end user oriented purpose by deciding to count backlinks as a "popularity contest" used to rank the appearance order of websites in search results.

In the name of "helping the end user" Google is implementing technical policies that are now chilling free speech across the Internet. The real human user should be free to follow or not follow a link. The presence of a link should not be dictated by what a computer algorithm thinks but by what the author(s) wish to provide for their audience. While technical people may be aware of options such as rel="nofollow" many authors simply don't understand the distinction. Consequently, a wide-range of authors will be silenced by this Google policy.

**Anne Sewell**

March 20, 2014 at 9:49 am

Google has beaten me down repeatedly over the years. One of my websites has been dragging on for 14 years now. Each time they hit me, I have dragged myself up again by the very tip of my fingernails. Now, however, I am on the verge of just plain giving up and completely changing career at the ripe age of 61. My websites were supposed to be my pension. It ain't going to work.

We have all allowed Google to take over exactly how we do things on the Internet, and its got to the stage where we small businesses just cannot survive any longer.

**John Kline**

March 21, 2014 at 2:49 pm

I have done two guest blog posts in my 42 years of life because I was asked to. Not for PR, etc., only because I'm an expert in the field I blogged about. This is why I was asked. If guest blogging is dead as far as ranking is concerned, fine. But legitimate guest blog posts linking to the authors website shouldn't have a negative effect on the site the blog post is linking to. This is a real fine line, and I'd like to know how it will be handled. Just keeping PR from being passed makes sense. My biggest worry is how "spammers" are essentially sculpting the nature of Google search. Those who follow Google TOS should be "rewarded", not treated like the spammers. Just my 3 cents.

**Jan Harris**

March 21, 2014 at 5:42 pm

If we devalue sites which have little or no readership, what happens to fledgling sites? Won't we just end up with a top tier monopoly?

**Ritchie Pettauer**

March 21, 2014 at 5:53 pm

Hi Matt, thanks for the insightful article! "Ultimately, this is why we can't have nice things in the SEO space" -> so true!

But imho guest blogging will always play a role with engaged blog authors - correct me if I'm wrong, but the kind of guest blogging you're talking about here refers to the kind of content marketing spam you quote in the beginning - resulting in a number of inbound

links.

To me, guest blogging means that an expert writes a posting for my blog or that I add my five cents on a third-party blog. That's far from any idea of "campaigning" 😊

I teach online communication at the University of Vienna, and when a student hands in a great piece, I sometimes ask them if they're interesting in posting their essay as a guest posting on my blog... expressing fresh ideas tops SEO rankings in my personal opinion.

Just a thought – don't you think Google penalizing "guest-blog-spammers" will result in more carefully "camouflaged" fake guest postings? That takes me back to the "nice things" – it's a rat race, really 😊

**Lilian**

March 22, 2014 at 6:37 am

Dear Matt

At the moment I have no guest post on my blog. However, I've been invited on several occasions to write about topics that I know in other blogs and for now I have not yet accepted the invitation. After reading your post, I have a question. By the act of writing for another blog that is not mine I'm offering a service. If I include a link within the post body that I consider relevant and add value to the article and that link is dofollow according to you I'm getting paid for my post. So from now on, all links on blogs that are not our own must be nofollow? ¿What would be the criteria? I think that if the link is amazing, relevant, that add value to the post, they deserve a dofollow. Don't believe? Thanks.

**Sammy**

March 22, 2014 at 6:47 am

Nofollow links can be good if they bring relevant traffic so it's still worth having a link I think.

**Nishant**

March 24, 2014 at 12:42 am

I am Shocked. Suddenly Many site's PR drop to 0, every my site also hit and drop to PR 0. I only accept free submission with Dofollow link and never charge for any post. Don't understand why is it happen with me?

**Dazza30**

March 25, 2014 at 5:40 am

Hi Matt,

I'm a mobile technology blogger, my site is a multi-author one and I do accept guest posts. However I only accept those that meet certain criteria e.g. well written, unique, informative etc

My own site was one of those effected by what seems to be a slightly vague / miss guided "attack them all policy" However I've taken it for what it is and Nofollowed all external links on the site.

What I'd like to know is do you consider linking to a G+ profile with rel=author to be spam or is passing page rank to Google OK? Also how about using the term "Guest Post" should I remove that from the site too?

**Anton Kolkovskiy**

March 25, 2014 at 6:20 am

That's really disappointing! Google makes a series of questionable decisions lately. We'll see where that brings us in future...

**Albert Albs**

March 25, 2014 at 9:37 am

This is great update Matt. I was against Low quality Spammy Guest Blogging. But now this come to an end. Thanks to Google Webmaster Team. And again No-Follow tag is savior for Journalists, Pro-writers, Blog Networkers who is doing real guest blogging to share their knowledge.

**Robert Gombos**

March 25, 2014 at 11:15 am

Psychologically it's in the human nature to abuse, to try to escape if they find themselves encaged. It's exactly like at the Zoo.

Over all these years everything turned into a competition, exactly like in the "Hunger Games" movie.

Companies with enough financial resources afforded to advertise themselves on every corner of the internet while the small businesses stood chained in the cellar.

Basically, you can wrap shiny tinfoil around a piece of...whatever and you can sell it with proper marketing.

People have abused more and more platforms and industries to gain power, better rankings and so on. They've done that by writing hundreds of promotional articles and sending them just for the sake of a backlink to hundreds of article directories; by falling into the trap of obscure SEO companies providing mass web directory submissions ("we'll submit your website to 2500 free web directories!!!" – sound familiar?); by using various software to spam WordPress-based blogs with thousands of spam comments (yeah, "keep up the good work, I will follow you!") using spam keywords instead of their real name, by hiring others to do guest posting for them (which lately, yes, it was paid and often the author signature contained an exact match keyword), spinning the hell out of an article, etc.

I really do understand that if I look from a certain perspective. I imagine those who make a couple hundreds/month and the society force them to produce more. Just because this is life.

But I understand why Google is fighting back as well. Instead, what I don't understand is the way they're doing it. Every statement, video is so... general that someone who is not able to see the entire picture just panics.

It's so unethical seeding fear among us all. Many of us don't even know anymore if it's sure to link to some resource or not. The basic concept of the WWW is broken because there isn't such thing as free will anymore (indirectly speaking). We'll all end-up linking only to Google, Yahoo, Bing, Wikipedia, Mashable. Just to make sure we won't get penalised, you know.

What if I read an interesting story on a blog I never heard of before? I won't link to that post because I might get smashed. See? This is wrong.

A robot can never judge something like a human brain can. There are thousands of posts on authority publications written by names everybody heard of – linking to obscure websites. You have money, you win. It's that simple. Can someone prove Name A Specialist haven't received \$3k to post something here or there (where he had access)!? Nope. That is why it's unfair what's going on.

There's no such thing as SEO, the concept itself it's a cheat; and either way you take it, there's no such thing as white hat SEO. From the moment you hire someone to do SEO you basically manipulating the normal flow of the Internet. It's like getting in a cab to get from point A to point B.

Anyway, as many suggested, I agree that Google should just ignore the links they consider manipulative. What if someone wants to smash a competitor and creates manipulative links

for them!? Who'll get penalized?

**Etienne Dupuis**

March 26, 2014 at 5:56 am

I'm really happy about this. I'm doing SEO's for a dozens of clients and guest blogging always felt spammy. If I didn't do it, my clients would challenge me to do it.

Now I can focus on the user experience and improving the website. Great move!

**Jack Schmitt**

March 26, 2014 at 3:35 pm

This is just another example of Google displaying their unchecked power in an effort to create a perfect online experience that is never going to be possible. The problem is that they don't seem to care how many innocent bloggers get hurt by their tactics. Their arrogance knows no bounds.

**{Mark|Jack|Leslie|Mary} {Brown|Smith|Cutts}**

March 27, 2014 at 9:26 pm

{Geez!|Oh Wow!|Oh my Gosh!} {admin|webmaster} {that is|that's|that sure is|that definitely is} a {very|really|incredibly} informative {post|story|article|} {posted on your website|posted|posted here}!

{Thanks|Thank you|Thank you very much}!

**Matt Cutts**

November 9, 2014 at 1:04 pm

Approved because I enjoyed the sly spinning joke. 😊

**Sohail Qaisar**

March 27, 2014 at 10:17 pm

Yes, finally the fall of guest blogging came, it should be stopped because a lot webmasters were creating spammy links in the form of guest blogging!

I think Google has done something valuable this time 😊

**Ellen G Kempler**

March 28, 2014 at 1:30 pm

Thanks for this post. I've never accepted guest blogs, but for the first year and a half, my site was plagued with spammers who came from links posted on Russian, Greek and Chinese sites. I have Akismet, but they were adding their names to my subscription list and I kept having to manually delete them. So I removed the subscription and comments forms from my site and added a Captcha (an addition problem) and have had very few problems ever since. Also, for anyone who wants to add content without blogging (I call it slogging) all the time should consider adding a RebelMouse page to their domain. I've created a Travel News page on my site which generates a MailChimp newsletter every week. About 80% of the page's constantly updated content comes from my social feeds, research and network and 20% from my own website and publications. It's easy to curate, share and update and makes a big visual statement. The e-letter requires about 5 minutes to prepare. I thank RebelMouse CEO Paul Berry every day for making my work life easier!

**Alan**

March 28, 2014 at 3:54 pm

The problem with issuing penalties (guest blogging today, what tomorrow?) is that people will start to become too frightened to not have 'nofollow' links. I am seeing this already, with blogs installing cross the board plugins to set all links to 'nofollow'.

The net result is the inevitable collapse of the link juice algorithm, as the logical conclusion is every link can be manipulated or is 'paid for' in kind or in money in some form.

I doubt Google are unaware of this, its rich enough to employ the brightest strategists, so are busy making sure that the other content aspects of their algo are ahead of the competition, before totally retiring link juice, whilst still delivering best of breed SERPs.

**Brian Hughes**

March 31, 2014 at 2:22 pm

Hey Matt, Funny but I think I understand the justification to the manual penalty against MyBlogGuest and their members. It's simple, their paid membership is a violation of the webmaster guidelines as paid links. You and your team are looking at all of their followed links now as paid links-that should be all no-follow. It's called fungable funds. It doesn't matter that no one is directly paying for a link. The fact that a contributor, the person that has the link, has to pay to contribute posts makes it a paid link. So then the whole system is corrupt and flagged. Unless every link is made no-follow, which was the opposite in their rules. They stated that you had to make all links follow. let me know if I'm even close. 😞

So I bet if they eliminated the paid membership to contributors and made it free for all members to contribute and post, it would help them recover from the penalty. Or make ALL links in every post no-follow.

Just send the application to Google's spam team to my email on here. 😊 J/K I think I might be sniffing up the right tree though. And if that's the case, GREAT work and way to stand firm to the standards and not fear what people are going to think of you.

And I'm out.

**Scott M Stolz**

April 1, 2014 at 9:47 am

I can see that maybe guest blogging is dead if you include links in the guest post. However, guest posting for the purpose of getting more exposure for an article in a highly trafficked website would be beneficial, especially if the website has great content, and your article is great content, as long as you include NO LINKS WHATSOEVER, not even to your own website. Only include the Google Authorship attribution, with no links at all. Guest blogging for the purpose of highlighting great content on an already popular website might still have its place. But I agree that including any sort of links whatsoever is bad.

Google does need to be careful though. If you make linking toxic, you create an incentive for unscrupulous people to purposely create spammy links for competing websites, in order to decrease their competitor's ranking, and increasing their own ranking. So Google needs to create a balance, otherwise it is just encouraging more spammy links designed to discredit competitors.

**Tom Smith**

April 3, 2014 at 10:54 pm

I do believe that if you have a real response to a blog article that you have an interest or knowledge in, you shouldn't be penalized. In fact, you should be rewarded for adding new information as needed. Those that abuse this as a single source for SEO purposes should change their ways now. Build your site with custom quality content and add to that as much as possible. Let's face it, the internet world as we knew it is gone.

**Kev**

April 5, 2014 at 3:48 am

Hi Matt,

I definitely would like to check with you to see if Google has any ambition to begin taking action against spam sites themselves.

By this, I mean will google be removing any influence that these blatant spam sites may have over both index results and penalties on legitimate sites.

Take a look at this site for example:

[parkingfail.ca](http://parkingfail.ca)

Should google really penalize any linked site that has most definitely been added purposefully for the purposes of negative SEO?

Please kill the Lernaean Hydra of -veSEO where it counts by not indexing appalling sites like this at all.

**Scott Rose**

April 6, 2014 at 10:35 pm

Although my blog is only 3 years old, I've never done any guest blogging before. The concept was never very appealing to me. Perhaps I felt it was spammy even back then. Instead, I paid attention to SEO, writing good quality content and in a relatively short time (1-1.5 years) was able to reach a high ranking in Google. What it taught me was, if you're good, you're good! Spreading yourself around every nook and cranny of the internet — fun as it may sound — is not what makes you an authoritative contributor in your niche. All of this is just my humble opinion of course and hey, what do I know?

**Addy**

April 9, 2014 at 3:54 am

I have lots of question in mind but right now I want to ask you that so "What are the ethic ways to doing guest blogging"? Is there any criteria which you set for guest blogging. And One more thing I would like to add that if people are paying for their website and earning backlinks so they are responsible for their website. So, how can we judge that it's all spam.

**Roger C. Parker**

April 12, 2014 at 8:05 pm

Dear Matt:

Regarding the "without looking like I was paying..." point, i.e., "I tried to find a sliver of daylight to talk about high-quality guest blog posts, but if you read the transcript you'll notice...", where can I find the transcript?

Roger

**Marian**

April 14, 2014 at 12:27 am

Guest Blogging works well, that's why people start spamming it. You can't blame Google for what they did. That's their job...

**Jack Schmitt**

April 14, 2014 at 8:52 am

Yes, spam is annoying, but it's not really going to hurt the legitimate marketer's business. Google, the unchecked bully, though, doesn't care if it destroys innocent marketers when they make one of their arbitrary "sweeps". That's just plain wrong! What if we all got in our cars tomorrow morning, and got stopped and fined \$5,000, because the government decided during the night to lower all speed limits by 50% of what speed limit signs read, and raise fines by a ridiculous amount, without giving us any warning, whatsoever? Our entire nation would be up in arms! I know that the term, dictatorship, get's thrown around rather loosely, at times, but in the case of Google, it describes them almost perfectly.

**Antara Man**

May 20, 2014 at 2:13 am

Exactly, Marian. There's a good, bad and ugly guest blogging after all. I currently guest blog on elephant journal – sites like theirs contains only articles of bloggers and writers providing at the end the author's bio, blog, twitter, facebook etc. Thought catalog is another example. This is a great way for a free marketing, getting your name, blog and social links out there. But one must do it in the right way.

So let's say the bad and ugly guest marketing is dead for SEO, not the good one.

**Holly**

April 14, 2014 at 1:37 am

I think there are two factors to consider, one, if bloggers only accepted guest posts from reliable and qualified sources (instead of accepting posts for cash) then there wouldn't be an issue, and two, the actual 'spammers' themselves.

Unfortunately, there isn't much that can be done about annoying 'spammers' so I think the responsibility (rightly or wrongly) is on bloggers to validate the content (and suppliers) that they accept on their blogs.

**Cristian Worthington**

April 16, 2014 at 3:39 pm

While I agree with the observations you've made, I'm not sure about the solution.

My company is engaged in what we believe to be a genuine effort to communicate on blogs and forums about our product. When we spot a blog post that relates to our technology, we try to leave comments and offer to write blog posts. We don't use an intermediary company to solicit these opportunities and we never engage unless we have something substantive to offer.

But sadly the spammers are causing a widespread reaction against all forms of, so called, self promotion. Even when its on-point and would further the conversation.

I'd like to think there is a middle ground.

**Davide D'Antonio**

April 17, 2014 at 1:25 am

Thank you very much for this post, I've recently start blogging and probably is better to avoid guest blogging now.

I will check out more from this blog, better to have some real quality advice from peoples like you!!

Cheers!

Davide.

**Nal S**

April 18, 2014 at 4:23 am

Is removing the incriminating information from Google listing illegal act?

A Lockheed Martin expert on information security, posted an offer on behalf of his "two high profile clients" to get search results concerning them removed from search engines... (more on <http://olli-kalha.blogspot.com>). The Romanian hacking team won the tender and in just two weeks the incriminating website, previously ranked 21st for the keywords, has completely vanished from Google listing.

Provided that the removed website contained the evidences of the crime committed by "high

profile clients", did Lockheed Martin, by making such website invisible to SE, committ the same kind of illegal act as it would be by removing the forensic evidence from the crime scene?

Your view on the subject would be appreciated.

**Jennifer**

April 19, 2014 at 9:22 am

Thank you for the comment you added to your post, which is too often overlooked: 'I just want to highlight that a bunch of low-quality or spam sites have latched on to "guest blogging" as their link-building strategy, and we see a lot more spammy attempts to do guest blogging. Because of that, I'd recommend skepticism (or at least caution) when someone reaches out and offers you a guest blog article.'

**Spence Rogers**

April 19, 2014 at 11:21 am

Hi Matt, thanks for this article. I like writing, so I want to post guest blogs. I also enjoy the traffic I receive from articles I write (organic traffic). It would help if Google would differentiate between legitimate guest blogging and obvious spam. Is there a certain number when Google decides it is spam? Or are there obvious sites where we can get into trouble? It is nice to know that Google will give us some SEO credibility if a good website decided to post our well-written article. Thank you for the information.

**Jeffery Dilege**

April 20, 2014 at 5:48 am

The more you try to perfect Google, the more it sucks. I find it harder and harder to find the specific answers I need anymore because you are giving high rank to old content. In the tech area, why int he world would I want 10 year old Cpanel content?

Sure, advanced search. It is just too bad that those settings are not retained every darned time I open my browser. Google needs to stop trying to police everything and clean their own house... or more and more people will go to alternate sites like bring, who I recently started using and love it. I am a guy that practically worshiped Google for a decade and now I feel it is not about what the people want anymore, it is about what the staff at Google want.

**Arup**

April 20, 2014 at 7:59 am

Thanks for this step. Spammers had made Guest blogging a cheap thing.

**Lauren**

April 22, 2014 at 7:08 am

Surely 'some' guest blogging is legitimate and of true value though? Will guest blogging now get you penalised, or will it just have zero impact in terms of SEO?

**Luiz Alberto**

April 23, 2014 at 11:22 am

I'm with Michael Aulia, too.

About an year ago I've started accepting guest-posts in my sites, and even tried one step further: as my sites are about Flash Games, I allowed the visitors to upload their own games, together with descriptions.

About 2 months later, I realized that ALL (100%) of the submissions were spammy, with hidden links all over the description.

Oh well 😞



**Darius**

April 24, 2014 at 11:27 pm

Guest posts should only be used for building reputation and sharing quality content to drive traffic from other blogs. Spamming is only good for short term.



**AVNII SORATHIYA**

April 28, 2014 at 5:50 am

So matt, on the basis of your reply to Conrad, are you saying that guest blogging with nofollow link is still in a place?



**Andrew**

April 30, 2014 at 8:05 am

Thanks for the great advise as usual Matt. I work in the insurance industry and it seems like the internet is saturated with blogging for a massive amount of links.

As always, quality vs quantity!



**Andy Watts**

May 1, 2014 at 12:28 pm

Many thanks Matt, i run a UK technology blog as a hobby here in the UK. Although I feature posts about computers (it's what I do for a living) I post quite a lot about scam emails in an attempt to warn people about getting conned .. I recently opened up my blog so tha anyone could post an article that would be moderated first by me.

What happens? Yep, I get a flood of spammy wannabe blog guest post offers with ads from everything from sunglasses to poker. Needless to say that none of them got published and I've closed the comments down so won't be accepting guest blog posts.

Thanks for your hard work, we need to keep SERPS relevant

Rgds

Andy – Salisbury, UK



**Sandra Nagel**

May 2, 2014 at 6:14 am

@Michelle Lowery hit the nail right on the head. If Google is to create (or has created) an algorithm to penalize "guest" bloggers, why is it that we still see articles on platforms like wiki-how show on the first page? As a marketing professional & webmaster, I take brand-awareness very seriously. Brand awareness can be created through several legitimate, **organic** methods. This includes high quality/no-spam guest-blogging.

I emphasize the term "organic". Could it be possible that Google has realized they're leaving money on the table, by allowing legitimate Marketing and SEO professionals do what they do best, without letting Google in on the company profits? Unfortunately, in many world situations, whether it is politics or business related, decisions are often made based on "the bottom line." And in many of the cases, the bottom line is profits.

Understandably, Google is a business first; and they, like the rest of us, have to continue creating new methods to increase revenue and decrease losses. That being said, it makes all the business sense in the world to penalize brand-awareness blogging, both good and spam, to drive up sales in Google Adwords. Don't get me wrong. There's nothing wrong with creating revenue opportunities. Nobody goes into business to fail; but when Google created a precedent by allowing good guest-blogging not to go unnoticed, only to years later

announce that guest-blogging should not be a consideration, is just bad P.R.

If Google can come up with all sorts of algorithms to filter through and keep up in such a dynamic world, wouldn't it make sense then to create algorithms that reward good articles, instead of looking for ways to penalize all?

**Paul Brewster**

May 6, 2014 at 9:26 am

Hi Matt

Here in the UK I had noticed the proliferation of blog posts and guest blogging activity during 2012/2013.

Whilst the guest blogging bandwagon is now losing momentum (May, 2014) and webmasters are being far more cautious in their desire to 'guest blog', I am now witnessing an increase in the number of agencies creating more and more banal website/blog content.

It seems that this desire to create content for the sake of content is leading the Internet to be awash with articles on the same subject matter which provide no further or useful insights on the subject(s) being discussed.

Often this stuff is churned out on a daily basis, sometime multiple articles each day! The writings seem to be mostly devoid of any opinion, comment or personal observation (from the author) and merely just a re-phrasing of the facts of a subject.

Maybe it's time for you to produce a new video extolling the virtues of 'quality' content that is genuinely unique and brings something to the table that is not already there.

Regards

Paul Brewster

**Franklin**

May 6, 2014 at 10:11 pm

Wow, this article really helps me a lot on how to accept good and realable guest post. I did accept some guest for those I know personally. Google must pursue in penalizing those spammy guest post out there.

**Christian R.**

May 7, 2014 at 1:09 am

I knew this was coming...

The quality of guest blogging was becoming obviously spammy.

I'm not suprised by the recent crackdown, Google is doing it's best keep the SERP's relevant.

**Rajat Dhameja**

May 8, 2014 at 4:35 pm

This is a very useful article. Thank you. This helps everyone create a unique and individual blog rather than spam freeride another blog.

Rajat Dhameja

**Bill**

May 11, 2014 at 5:28 am

Some of my clients are saying that they are getting more requests for guest blogging than

in the past. I guess many of the folks attempting to offer guest blogging haven't heard about this.

**Anonymous**

May 13, 2014 at 5:30 am

Dear Matt Cutts,

We represent Anonymous in Poland. We're watching what your employers – google – have done in polish search results and we really don't like it! Stop removing good websites from results – this people have jobs, families, kids and loans – you're ruining their life! This is our first and last warning. If we get more emails from people who are looking for help we will destroy you. We own a huge polish botnet and we can develop a software which will click your ads so nobody will use them anymore, because clicks won't have any success. And don't think that we don't know how it works – our bot is typing keywords, finding ads and clicking it via pixel map, then it's acting like a normal user – watching website, clicking links. Chess, mate!

First and last warning. Remember this!

Regards,  
Anonymous.

**Jameyson MacDonald**

May 15, 2014 at 9:25 am

Over the past couple years, I have read that "keywords are no longer relevant" (they have been abused to such a degree with spam that they are no longer taken into consideration by Google); that on page optimization is much less effective to get you ranked these days; and now that guest blogging (and trying to generate quality backlinks in general) is a futile endeavor that could cause more harm than good. With all these changes, combined with Google's now individualized search results, what is left for the new website owner? How does someone with a new website compete with established, popular websites if SEO is, for all practical purposes, dead?

**Joni DiMaggio**

May 19, 2014 at 8:10 am

Dammyson "*People sharing content is what makes the web work.... That was actually its point from creation*".

Wrong, and more wrong! The concept of people communicating across continents, sharing pictures, talking on screens, exchanging virtual items, etc. has been described in sci-fi books written 100 years ago. its also been visually presented in movies, tv and comic books. You're confusing the fiction you read and watched as a kid with factual events that happened before you were born. Sharing content evolved about 30 years after the web was created. But even if content sharing didn't exist today, the web would still be working just fine because its the internet that makes the web work not some software service that allows users to post pictures and words.

Raw data communication was the point of internet creation. To connect existing computers together forming a "network" and connecting that network to other networks. THAT is a web. A collaborative effort began in 1961 between private sector and the U.S. Department of Defense as they wanted a way to transfer sensitive data safely. It had nothing to do with content sharing.

The problem with all of you people who are complaining that Google is punishing you or creating the problem is that you have become lazy spoiled brats expecting Google to do your job. You want the shortcuts back. And you're obsessed with page ranking because you believe the myth that better ranking makes you more money. It doesn't, it never has.

**Omar Yesid Mariño**

May 20, 2014 at 10:20 am

I know you are trying hard to have quality results for Google. But, honestly Matt, I think Google is losing this spam war.

Now, this post is just scaring me of having guest bloggers on my sites, even if they write quality posts. That is unfair. We all are paying the consequences of the inability of Google to win this war. Even, we have to worry about a spam site linking us: That is not making sense! In the old days, it was supposed that we need to worry about only for content over we have control. And now, a competitor can point a lot of spam links to us and BUM!, our site can be penalized. That is silly.

I have seen spam results even for the most easy queries.

Even, if I search for my own name -Omar Yesid Mariño- in Google, my personal blog is not appearing whatsoever. Instead, a lot of fool pages (besides my social profiles) appears prominent. I can't imagine why a "sophisticated" algorithm cannot understand a personal blog should appear in the first positions when the name of the person is searched for!!! I'm sure that would be an obvious thing even in the old Altavista days!

Apparently, the good times of quality SERPS on Google have gone. That is sad. 😞

I hope you find the good way soon because, if this continues, there is a huge space for a new search engine in the market with real quality SERPS, and I hope they emerges soon.

**Stephen McCance**

May 22, 2014 at 1:18 am

Unfortunately there will always be spam, there is nothing that can be done about that. To be honest you don't really even need to read these bits of advice from Matt Cutts if you are running your website properly. Just do everything naturally and in the readers best interest and if you do that then there is no way you can ever be caught out by any change in algorithm or penalty. If you are guest blogging but on good sites who have a large readership you will still be fine...as far as I can tell...

**Joe Riviello**

May 22, 2014 at 3:09 pm

What I'm taking home from all of this is, if you plan on guest blogging, be sure to only do it on a site that is owned by someone you know very well; and on a site that does not engage in any form of spammy posting; and one that does not accept money for guest posts; and one that only contains no-follow linking. Basically, Google doesn't want me to gain any link juice because then I will be forced to run an Adwords campaign? That's simply not fair. I totally agree that you should penalize spammy sites. But to the rest of us who write quality content and want to guest post it on quality sites, with the hopes that more readers will read our posts and share it, to us, Google is not being fair!

**sivani**

May 23, 2014 at 10:46 am

i agree with your points, now most of the guest blogging are spamming our websites. It is better to avoid the unknown guest bloggers allowing to enter into our websites. At same time we must agree that google is not responsible for those spammers.

**Mirza Sharz**

May 25, 2014 at 7:52 pm

Hi again Matt, one of my blog published some guest posting articles. Should I delete those posting? Thank you very much in advance for your answer (I wonder if you would answer this question)

**Mirza Sharz**

May 25, 2014 at 7:53 pm

Hi again Matt, one of my blog published some spammy guest posting articles. Should I delete those posting? Thank you very much in advance for your answer (I wonder if you would answer this question)

**Thomas Zinsavage**

May 26, 2014 at 1:36 am

Thanks for the information. I deal with spam ridiculously often. I have two questions though. One is is me letting people with websites in the comment hyperlinked to their name like normal going to be an issue/negative for my website? Two is what do you suggest for getting our websites PR up then? Just standard backlink building and backlinks from high quality sites?

**Reuben**

May 27, 2014 at 8:41 am

Hi Matt, has it crossed your mind that maybe somebody is trying to kid you? I mean you have been speaking about these kinds of practices for years and maybe it came to somebody's head just to see how you would react to such things. Mind you it just occurred to me.

**Chris Pergantis**

May 27, 2014 at 2:20 pm

We are working very hard to put together a team of content writers and a process for managing that content. We have a long way to go even after all of the work we have done to date. As you talk about guest bloggers does this pertain to hiring permanent contracted bloggers?

**Avery Miller**

May 29, 2014 at 12:12 pm

Hey Matt! I did **one** guest post once. It wasn't spammy or anything. Is that going to affect my rankings? Thanks alot! (I've heard you on TWiT a few times! Say Hi to Leo for me!)

**Peter**

May 31, 2014 at 6:31 am

I've seen many people just ask for guest post to get some backlinks. Thanks god! I already stopped accepting guest posts which are of for backlinks purpose only.

Google are doing very nice job and now it's hard for guest bloggers to get free backlinks using guest posts 😊

**john**

June 1, 2014 at 9:20 am

Hi again Matt, one of my blog published some spammy guest posting articles. Should I delete those posting? Thank you very much in advance for your answer (I wonder if you would answer this question)

**Chrissy**

June 3, 2014 at 8:35 am

Do you mean spammy comments on a blog post? No one can leave a guest blog post without you allowing it. Delete all spam comments for sure. 😊 Couldn't look at your website as the link you posted is to amazon?

**Maudymukai**

June 2, 2014 at 6:14 pm

Thank you for this post and videos. Very interesting thoughts about guest blogging and its downfall.

**Andy**

June 6, 2014 at 10:24 am

Hi Matt,

I have to question the last suggestion though. I may be the only one out here still advocating for guest blogging, but the point of authorship and associated AuthorRank is to help with authenticity. If an author has achieved a good AR and user following, then genuine guest blogging is still valid. So the question, why attach another author on your site and content if the guest author didn't write it? I do like the idea of pursuing the author to post on "your" site versus traditional posting articles on other sites.

**Noelle King**

June 9, 2014 at 11:29 am

Well said, for those that have good intentions will benefit as long as your intent is to engage the reader.

**Stephen Hawkins**

June 11, 2014 at 8:21 am

OK, I am no expert but I, like a lot of people are trying to build their websites up. BUT, I am getting a lot from any blog post I read This one in particular (so far). It is helping me to learn more about Internet Marketing SEO etc and a bunch of other stuff.

A couple of things.

If you left someone in your kitchen with \$1000 on the side, some people may pocket a few notes. Some wouldn't. (I am the later by the way). In just the same way some people with (and I'm just guessing here from the hundreds of generic emails I receive every week) the aim of building their website up will copy and paste the same post to as many blog sites as possible in order to get those back-links out there.

Again, I'm no expert but aren't back-links from low ranking low quality sites pretty useless anyway.

And more to the point aren't the business people who run the high end blogs (like this one) as helpful as they may make out (I am pointing no fingers at anyone here!). I am a reader after all.

I am on my way to a successful site after all. Why would I do anything to jeopardize that?

On a more philosophical side, are we not all supposed to be helping each other here? Do we not gather when bad things happen to the weak?. Are we not full of compassion when some far off peoples suffer?

I am sure that the owner of this and other top blogs is quite capable of disallowing any bad people in through his door.

I can appreciate that some like myself haven't got a fully developed site yet so a link back system would not be much use, but what If I had thousands of visitors and readers? (I don't) I am just making a point that each case should be judged on its own merit.

I don't consider myself to be a spammer and with respect anyone who claims it is quite wrong. When I first discovered that "My Business" depended on other peoples businesses (sounds dodgy to me?) linking to me/accepting me???? Sounds like a tactic set in place to remove competition to me but like I said, I am no expert.

Thanks for making me a part of this post which was both entertaining and informative to read. Thank You./ Bye For Now.

**Pijush Mitra**

June 15, 2014 at 12:12 pm

You are right Matt. Guest blogging only for SEO purpose comes to an end. Thanks for sharing the concern again and again.

**Stepheny Stanley**

June 16, 2014 at 10:28 pm

Matt Says: *"If the links are nofollowed, then they don't affect PageRank, so it would be outside the scope of my team at that point. A high-quality guest post with nofollowed links can still be a good way to get exposure to a new audience, branding, etc."*

So it would be better to work with HIGH QUALITY POSTS even with NOFOLLOW links. We should work for exposure instead of targeting backlinks. Quality work is all required in this era.

**Eric Rudolphe**

June 16, 2014 at 10:45 pm

Whenever I consider guest posting or whether to accept guest posting I find it good practice to consider the following. Would a user naturally be looking at this site/URL if they were looking for your products or services?

If not then its ONLY purpose is to manipulate rankings.

Also works in considering whether it is a natural backlink by looking in Google Analytics and determining whether it ever brings referral traffic.

**Jameyson MacDonald**

June 29, 2014 at 6:53 am

I gotta tell you, Matt, Google has really gone to pot the past couple years. Not only have you guys made "relevant" search results anything **but** relevant; you've done a lot to punish honest websites while rewarding those with large expense accounts who pay for advertising.

While it is true that in the past blackhat plays like keyword stuffing and link farming put people in the top who shouldn't be there, the older algorithms made it possible for a nobody with a great deal of really good stuff to share to get some recognition in the search results.

Unfortunately, nothing Google does to weed out spam and the like will stop blackhatters from finding a way to manipulate the system. Webmaster forums are full of people selling PR3 - PR9 link space and software designed to boost rank, and I hate to tell you, the ones using this are still ranking high. But all these algorithmic changes have made it virtually impossible for nobodies to be found, even if they have truly awesome content.

Then there is the matter of relevancy. What used to be a Google hallmark seems to be a thing of the past these days. I know of many people who have stopped using Google all together (myself included) because they are no longer finding what they are looking for in your search results.

I remember reading about the Soviet Union and how, in the initial phases of Communism, the Bolsheviks claimed to have the best interest of the people at heart. They were going to be the best form of government that would eventually give way to some utopian dream, but in order to get there, they had to pass more and more laws to combat what they perceived to be a threat to pure socialism and in the process, became this oppressive behemoth that

eventually failed.

Take a lesson from history, Matt. In Google's efforts to weed out spam and become the best search engine, you have become this oppressive behemoth and despite what your quarterly statements may say now, if it doesn't change, it will become your downfall...

**Malcolm Felt**

July 1, 2014 at 10:00 am

I completely agree that guest blogging solely for the purposes of SEO and linkbuilding is spam. I feel that guest blogging should only be done with real valuable content that helps the readership of the site and increases exposure and branding of the writer. Thanks for calling it like it is

**Pam Sallegue**

July 2, 2014 at 9:07 pm

Hi Matt, I was just wondering, and I've been meaning to ask you this. Do you think, one day all (or some) of the algorithms of Google will be implemented again – like when the web are already cleaned from spam. Will it be possible that one day, guest posting, or press release will weigh so much again the way it was before? Thanks a lot Matt!

**Jameyson MacDonald**

July 3, 2014 at 2:31 pm

I have a couple questions for you, Matt. Why should I have to worry about some trashy website linking to my site and better yet, why should I be penalized if a website I have no control over links to me? It is very common for a website to have links on other sites without the website owner even knowing they exist, yet you're telling me I could be penalized for this?

Secondly, why is Google constantly removing valid methods of gaining visibility in the search results? Guest blogging, when done properly, has always been a viable means of gaining visibility for new website owners with little money to market their sites. Now you're penalizing blog owners for allowing this simply because some jerks use blogging to spam?

Here's a thought: it's a well known fact that hackers use Google queries to gain sensitive information to hack websites or personal accounts. What would happen if ICANN decided to revoke Google's right to have a domain name or have an online presence because hackers used Google's resources to commit crimes?

Being penalized for the actions of others, no matter how you justify it, is WRONG.

**Katty**

July 16, 2014 at 2:30 am

Thank you Matt for the "Added Section" on your post :You raise my incomprehension. I also received this type of message of "Partners in the same niche" and I think it's quite comprehensible to continue guest post building on authority site. But at the same time it's a disincentive/difficult for new webmasters who have not yet popularity or are in the process of building their social network. Because, I admit that a High Authority Domain/Site which allow guest post refuse generally to work with new brand(I newbie,webmaster, etc) And I'm afraid that, it'll force new webmaster to work with a respected SEO Company by default.:( it means that, this part of SEO will be accessible for others...

**Rishab Saraf**

July 16, 2014 at 5:37 am

Hey thanks for the heads up matt. Most of the blogs on the internet encourage guest posts for backlink generation. But none of them highlight the drawbacks! I am new to blogging and started my blog following the guidelines of a famous one (wouldn't name it), and even it

suggested to have guest bloggers write posts.

**Andrew Blackman**

July 22, 2014 at 7:27 am

Nice post, Matt. I've been blogging for a few years, and have witnessed the same decline. I get so many proposals like the one you've pasted here, all of them showing that the person spent absolutely no time researching my site and what I actually post about. What's worse is when they send follow-up emails, sounding very indignant that I didn't take the time to reply. If you want a reply, take the time to send an email that makes sense 😊 I agree with your approach: I only accept guest posts from people I know, and I'll only write guest posts to gain exposure to a new audience, not for SEO. Sad to see a good thing get a bad name.

**Nauf Sid**

July 26, 2014 at 12:09 pm

Matt, does Google has specific guest post detection systems in place? This practice is still rampant with people using guest blog networks to get easy guest post links.

Will a single guest post on an authoritative domain be considered as spam?

**Ilyas Ahmad**

August 5, 2014 at 10:05 am

so you guys also takes break :p and i was thinking that google never takes any break .. just kidding,

Dear Matt this is the first time i have ever read someone's post on website and also commenting for first time. i enjoyed your blog its very decent. I am having some problems after transferring my blog to WordPress and i am unable to add the new site into webmasters, i import all the blogger posts and redirect them to new site too which is working fine but webmaster thing out of my control. see you once you came back. enjoyed you holidays..

**Yogesh**

August 11, 2014 at 12:21 pm

Thanks for the post specially for organizing videos according to year. Saw all of them still I had a question after going through your post & videos

If i have a blog of my own regarding technology niche and my blog has become popular with good Page Rank and some of the other technology person wants to share its genuine knowledge or software concept to my blog but he needs reference of his site as the software is developed by that person.

So in this case if i have given dofollow links, did my blog consider as spam??

**Lisa**

August 12, 2014 at 7:00 am

Thanks Matt for this insightful article. I get emails all the time from people asking if they can write a guest post on one of my blogs. I have not taken anyone up on their offer!

I also notice a lot of bloggers posting about guest blogging as a best practice for SEO purposes – perhaps they did not read your post 😊

Thanks again for the great information.  
Lisa

**Bishal Biswas**



August 16, 2014 at 11:13 am

Although if so, Guest Blogging will be alive, if done appropriately.

I believe,

If you do guest blogging not in just sake of getting a link back to your blog but to share [Blogging Tips](#), or any tactic either to benefit the readers and then and there they would be in profit.

Ain't it?

Guest blogging isn't dead, nor it would gonna be. Just what we require is changing our views, and have a close watch at the new Algorithms of Google.

– Bishal Biswas



**Jameyson MacDonald**

August 16, 2014 at 11:29 am

To be honest, Matt, I wasn't the least bit surprised that you did not approve my previous comment to this post, expressing my disappointment with Google's inept policies. But it does surprise me that, despite your refusal to allow others to see my thoughts about this post, you continue to send me notices by email about new comments.



**Nigel Abery**

August 21, 2014 at 6:25 am

I think that Google should focus on making the search engine detect quality content regardless of if it is a guest post or not. For google to say that all guest posts are spam is just lazy. Good content is good content, and content providers should be rewarded with follow links. It does not matter if you are a guest or not. If you are not a guest poster and you produce spammy content is that better than a guest post producing quality?



**Jeffrey DeArmond**

August 26, 2014 at 4:38 pm

After you published this post, everyone talked about it. I'm glad I got to hear it from you instead of through the grapevine. I look forward to your future blogs on the state of the SEO industry. Hopefully people stop trying to 'game' the system, and instead focus on providing quality.



**Sada Salim**

August 29, 2014 at 11:10 pm

For guest blogging I will not give philosophy but from my experience content marketing would be preferable and beneficial for SEO and it works in long tail targetting



**Pooja Narang**

August 30, 2014 at 4:11 am

I've seen many people just ask for guest post to get some backlinks. Thanks god! I already stopped accepting guest posts which are of for backlinks purpose only.



**amr mahmued**

August 31, 2014 at 9:13 am

The best thing in the commentary and simplistic view is understood by novices Thank you

**Jason Wright**

August 31, 2014 at 7:12 pm

Hey Matt, It is great you are letting us know about how Google is and will be looking at guest blogging. I also feel that SEO experts who pass on a great guest blog opportunity because they think it will not help their efforts fails to think like a marketing expert. As you said the opportunity on a to do a guest blog on a legitimate site will also create awareness and can still drive visitors to their sites and businesses. Just make sure to let us know when a guest blog will actually penalize the blogger when legitimately creating unique guest blog content.

**Michael**

September 3, 2014 at 6:26 pm

I have always read that guest blogging was an acceptable practice. If not, what does Google recommend for acceptable link building strategies?

**Stuart**

September 4, 2014 at 1:52 am

In my opinion guest posting, when done for the purpose of providing useful and informational insights and tips in your area of expertise is still a very viable process. I agree though that its main aim shouldn't be to earn links however earning links still appears to be a huge ranking factor.

**emre**

September 7, 2014 at 2:23 am

thank you.

Hi again Matt, one of my blog published some spammy guest posting articles. Should I delete those posting? Thank you very much in advance for your answer (I wonder if you would answer this question)

**Makro**

September 11, 2014 at 5:34 am

great, If you go by the rule of – "Build content and experiences for your audience and not the search engines. If you're doing something that doesn't influence/touch your audience, the you probably shouldn't do it" – then I reckon you'll be ok. That's not only good SEO, that's good marketing, and I don't see that changing (until the inevitable day that paid ads and Google products are 100% of most Google SERPs).

Here's a thought: Compare SEO it to mexican food (because everyone love mexican food) Eating a large amount of burritos is bad for you, eventually you're gonna hurt your health through either eating too many or eating the really unhealthy, fatty burritos. But don't completely stop eating burritos – they're great after all. The trick is to eat in moderation and only get the really healthy burritos without the bad ingredients. And make sure you try tacos and enchiladas, and nachos. And be sure to do other activities other than eating Mexican food.

**Frivcon**

September 15, 2014 at 7:18 am

Hi Matt,

Thanks for the great article, there is definitely a lot of spamming and unethical techniques in the seo industry.

The challenge remains in the essence that seo is not clear and there is no way to really monitor your progress or to understand exactly how your efforts are being measured.

This leaves any person wanting the best for their website and throw everything at the wall and see what sticks.

Its an evolving industry...

**Clark**

September 25, 2014 at 10:24 pm

Is it safe to assume guest blogging will hurt your SEO efforts ? Or do you just need to provide solid content within your niche ?

**Dinn**

September 30, 2014 at 7:41 pm

I agree. Nowadays guest blogging is becoming of spammy practice. There are many low of quality article out there which only created for link building purpose.

**Patrick**

October 4, 2014 at 3:56 am

I am a volunteer admin for an MOJ campaign site. I was intending to look for folks to guest write the odd article. Having read your article and many of the responses, I am now convinced that this is not such a good idea. So what is the alternative "paid" authors.

**Albert Smith**

October 4, 2014 at 4:54 pm

And guest blogging with nofollow links is ok? I mean the problem is solved or it could be dangeorus too?

thanks  
Albert S.

**Isaac Hammelburger**

October 6, 2014 at 12:17 pm

Guest blogging is going the same way backlinks went, It's all about quality, not quantity

**Jeanette Helen Wilson**

October 7, 2014 at 8:44 am

Hi, thanks so much for your informative article. It's a shame that something that started out with good intentions soon got exploited, but I suppose that's the nature of the web beast! We keep having to evolve and adapt... the internet is like evolution sped up... it's changing all the time. But I suppose it keeps us on our toes and doesn't allow website owners and bloggers to become too big for their boots!

**Vlad**

October 11, 2014 at 1:32 am

The next update Google in 2014,when?

**Anto**

October 19, 2014 at 12:45 am

Can someone say a definitive word and point to the proper resource if nofollow links influence the ranking?

**Pulkit Thakur**

October 19, 2014 at 11:41 pm

Hi Matt,

Its really good to see that you connect with guys time and again..

But what I have observed time and again when something gets unleashed , you come with something that gives IMers something to work on(that's how life works you have new things to learn everyday), but believe me I have observed whatever you reject works better with bit of moulds...

when in lighter mode or feeling exhausted lets discuss spirituality and human behaviour in my forum 😊

**Mark Anderson**

October 22, 2014 at 4:20 am

Well honestly speaking Danny Sullivan i totally agree with yopu...

**Priyanka Kamble**

October 29, 2014 at 1:09 am

I understand the concern regarding spam, however, we see this with everything on the new these days. Instead, please could we please have some guidelines for sites who accept guest posts rather than giving the impression that Google is saying sites shouldn't accept them at all!

**Steve Walters (Google AdWords Consultant)**

October 30, 2014 at 5:27 am

Interesting post as always! Though in honesty, I do find your video's a little vague – in fairness I can understand perhaps your reasons and difficulties in explaining detailed case examples.

As a blog owner, if I accept Guest blogs I 'guess' your saying that I should be responsible in checking out the originality? As I'm guessing that's the main thing a Google Search Engine can pick up; 'duplicate content'.

However, I don't quite follow where you say Google is interested in 'how the Guest Blog helps my site visitors'. As, other than the level and quality of 'comments', or perhaps number of social shares, I can't see how Google could score the usefulness of a guest bloggers 'content' per se.

So, I guess what I'm left wondering is... what are the criteria/guide checklist factors to keep an eye out for prior to 1.making a guest blog post or 2.accepting one.

Still, your posts are always useful and appreciated! Thanks.

Steve Walters.

**Maxim**

November 5, 2014 at 3:04 am

I always knew that the guest blogging for Seo is bad, and I do not understand why people continue to do it. Perfect solution for Google.

**Mark**

November 6, 2014 at 6:00 pm

Maybe because Google still sells ads for Guest Posting Services. A few months back ads for guest posting covered Google search results. The same is true with every link building tactic that Google now penalizes websites for using. I am not sure how it is OK to sell ads for these services, but illegal to use them.

**Matt Cutts**

November 7, 2014 at 8:50 pm

Hey Mark, I've talked to some of the folks who remove ads for e.g. PageRank for sale. In the past, it was one time sweeps, and then after that we managed to take action on most keywords but people would find creative phrases to buy that got around those blocks. I'll pass this feedback on to the right folks—thanks for mentioning it.

**Mark**

November 7, 2014 at 9:59 pm

buy backlinks – seems like another logical ad words term to remove. I think I counted 9 businesses advertising selling links!!!!!! In 2014!!!!

**Vlad**

November 7, 2014 at 12:17 am

No more comments!

**subhakar T**

November 5, 2014 at 6:46 am

It's really amazing how quickly Google understands SEO practices and changes its algorithms. For few years, content writers and SEO companies had a good idea posting content on various sites. With article marketing getting a hit and now guest blogging, businesses are left with implementing only best practices and no spam.

**Mark**

November 7, 2014 at 8:14 am

I knew you wouldn't approve my comment. Then you might actually have to explain to the world Google's hypocrisy. One day we will meet my friend, & I will have my revenge. You made my family suffer, & so I will make yours suffer as well.

**Matt Cutts**

November 7, 2014 at 8:54 pm

Hey Mark, I pre-moderate comments to help reduce the amount of low-quality/spam comments on the blog. It's not my highest priority though—there's a backlog of over 14,000 comments on the 1000+ blog posts that I've done. I'll probably start disabling comments on older posts at some point, just to avoid people submitting comments that I don't have time to moderate or respond to.

**Sammy**

November 7, 2014 at 9:43 pm

Wow.. Matt you respond so meekly to a threat on your family? I guess it's all in a day for you.

**Matt Cutts**

November 8, 2014 at 11:36 pm

Sammy, I'm afraid that sort of message does happen. I think

it's mainly frustration because I didn't approve his comment quickly, not a true threat on my family. Nonetheless, I'll probably close out comments; people can always discuss this topic elsewhere on the web.

**Don Sturgill**

November 8, 2014 at 11:47 pm

I got a little heated when the news first hit, too. The move made a huge dent in my income ... and, yes, my family suffered. I told Matt he should "stick a fork in it" (unpublished, and I don't blame him). That Mark guy definitely took it way too far, though.

At the end of the day, we are all just trying to do our jobs as well ... and, hopefully, as ethically as we can. I still see nothing wrong with writing good articles and placing them on sites for link-back value ... but, then again, I am a writer and not a spam-stopper.

One thing we can all agree on, perhaps: The internet shouldn't be allowed to turn into a dump site for junk. Everyone has a different interest. We can disagree to disagree.

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