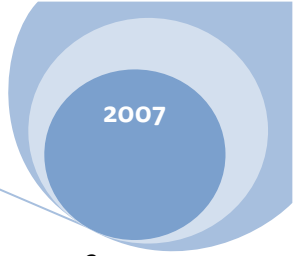


Your Link Popularity Study Guide



The screenshot shows the RankReady website interface. At the top left is the RankReady Beta logo. Navigation links include ARTICLES, HELP / SUPPORT, DIRECTORY LISTING, FORUMS, and MEMBERS LOGIN. A blue banner features the text "One way & Reciprocal & Three way Linking . Get your Rank Sky High and Boost your backlinks!" with two white arrows pointing right. Below the banner is a "WELCOME TO RANKREADY" section. On the left, an "ADVANCED MEMBERSHIP" section lists benefits like "Save 90% of your link exchange time" and "Auto link approval". The "FEATURED WEBSITES" section highlights BollyWoodinsight.com. The "CATEGORIES" section lists 126 websites across 212 categories, including Arts and Humanities (11), Business and Industry (33), Computers (28), Health and Fitness (14), News and Media (3), Recreation (15), Shopping (8), and Society (9).



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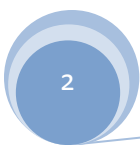
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Link Popularity Guide

Link Popularity is a much misunderstood topic among webmasters and online business owners. In the quest for **search engine rankings**, link popularity has quickly developed into the **single-most important tool** for improving your rankings, and in the process, increasing your profits.

This guide is a brief stroll inside the world of link popularity. In it I've tried to cover the different aspects and perspectives of link popularity, including what works, what doesn't work, and what the future of link popularity holds for online business owners like you and me who depend on search engine traffic for the success of their business.

Link Popularity

I'll give you a quick definition of what link popularity is, and then move on to talk about why it is so important, and how it is essentially determined.

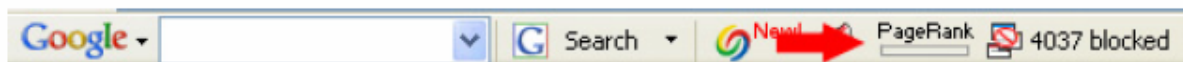
What is link popularity?

“A measure of the number of web pages that link to your site.”

Quite simply, link popularity is the number of incoming links to your website. You can say that link popularity is just a part of what search engines look at when they examine the back links of a website, and this is how it looks.

Search engines typically look at:

- The **number of sites** that link your website. Remember THAT. The “number of sites” that link to your website. The more websites that link to your site, the higher you will rank. Regardless of on what topic these websites are. 100 links from non-related websites are ALWAYS better than no links at all. You should always accept a link request unless the website has a “gray barred” Google Page Rank.



- How **important** are the websites that link to yours.

The importance of the linking website is a central pillar of search engine rankings. In other words, **all links are not created equal**. A link from an “important” website carries more weight than a link from a low-key, not-so-important website. On the other hand, as I've said above. **Any link, no matter how non-related OR what their Page Rank is, is better than having no link at all**. You should always accept link from anyone that's willing to trade, unless of course, they are penalized and have a “gray” Google PR as shown above.

So how does link popularity figure into all this?

The Great Search Engine Race

Search engines have one sole purpose:

To provide users with the most relevant content (relevant to what they are searching for) that is ranked by its quality.

(Note that the above definition is **my own**, and is a culmination of my understanding from following search engines and practicing search engine optimization for over five years).

In pursuit of this goal, search engines have developed sophisticated algorithms that rank web pages for **relevancy** and **quality**. In determining relevancy, search engines tend to measure on-page factors such as relevant content – on-page optimization is dedicated towards improving your website’s relevancy in the eyes of search engines.

For determining quality, search engines have moved towards **inbound links** and their quality as a measure of a website’s importance or quality. Why is this?

Much of this move has to do with Google’s Page Rank algorithm. The concept is simple: Links are the easiest and most impartial methods of determining how popular a website or a web page is. Taken in reverse, this also means that **quality resources** will eventually be the **most popular**, thus making links a direct factor in influencing the search engine’s “quality” ratings for any website.

The rise of link popularity (as a measure of the links pointing to a website) in search engine optimization is founded on the principle that great sites will naturally attract many links, and content-poor sites will have difficulty attracting any links. While this has been badly abused by black-hat SEO techniques, the fact remains that the system is correct in principle, and search engines are continuously working to remove problems that rise because of dubious and unethical optimization techniques.

While Google was and is the frontrunner in giving importance to link-popularity (and with Google serving 40-50 percent of the search engine traffic, you’d be hard pressed to find a reason NOT to build links), other major search engines such as Yahoo, MSN Search and AltaVista have also given importance to link popularity, making it a critical component of your search engine strategy.

High Rankings

It will help if you had a grounding idea on the type of links that can help your website get high search engine rankings. Note that these factors, as well as other important influences on link popularity, will be discussed and elaborated on in detail throughout this guide, so getting a solid grip on the basics right from the start is a high priority.

High Page Rank

while Page Rank has been somewhat discredited amongst elite search engine optimizers, the fact remains that Page Rank is by far one of the most **visible** and **monetizable** methods of determining the importance of a web page. And despite the criticism, Page Rank remains what it was before – an important, though not a defining element, of establishing link popularity.

- **Permanent Links** – Link-ageing is a concept that evolved out of the Sandbox Theory – a Google-related speculation that has come into the public’s eye since mid-2004. Essentially, Google puts a small restriction or penalty on new websites – this penalty – in part – monitors the “age” of the inbound links of a website. Once a website builds a sufficient threshold of reputation through a combination of quantity and quality (and **aged links**), the penalty is gradually reduced and then removed. This highlights the importance of getting permanent links to increase your link popularity – it will work on eliminating your Sandbox penalties while “keep” the reputation you have built today for tomorrow.

- **Site Quality** – The quality of a website, as determined by the search engine, is a major factor (along with Page Rank) in establishing the importance of a link. In this regard, different search engines have marginally different criteria that can possibly alter the importance of a link from one search engine to the next. However, on a general scale, this is determined both by on-page factors and inbound links for the linking website itself. (Again, note that any link is better than no link... So, never turn down a link request if they're not penalized)

Building Links

There are several ways that you can build links for your website, and I've separated them into two categories to give you a better holistic view of how link building works (or can work).

- Active Link-Building
- Passive Link-Building

Let's look at each category, and the different types of techniques involved in both of these.

Active Link-Building

This involves the webmaster (meaning you) actively searching for links by using one or more of the methods listed below. This is a much more common strategy of acquiring links to your website compared to passive link-building, primarily because of two reasons:

- It's **easier** to exchange links, or submit to directories, and even pay for links, rather than let your link-popularity grow naturally.
- It gives you **measurable results** – any active link-building campaign will give the webmaster exact statistics for how many back links have been developed, of which Page Rank, from which URL, etc.

So what are the different methods one can use to actively build links?

Reciprocal linking

Reciprocal linking involves two websites exchanging links – you link to my site, and I'll link to yours. This remains the most common form of link-building as this is the cheap, fast way to build your link popularity.

Usually reciprocal linking does not involve any payments, and in most cases websites have dedicated link directories or link pages built primarily for the purpose of link-building.

The benefits? Reciprocal linking is definitely the fastest way to get LOTS of links pointing to your website. I am often asked, "Should I trade links with a website that's not directly related to the topic of my website?" My answer is an emphatic YES! As long as your link directory, on your website, is broken down into themed categories, you should most definitely trade links with the other website. This is VERY important. You should always trade links with another website no matter if they:

1. Have a PR0 page. In 99.9% of cases, the reason they have no page rank is because

their website is new. If you trade links with them, chances are, they're also actively building links, so this PR0 page will soon be a PR3, PR4, or even more!

You would have missed out on this, had you ignored the link request...

2. Not specifically related to your website. Who cares? I will gladly exchange links with any website, unless they have a "gray bar" page rank (which is completely different from have a PR0 webpage) I've seen that many RankReady members are letting MANY link requests slip away because they're getting requests from non-related sites. This is a HUGE mistake and you're letting hundreds of free links slip away.

3. Over 30 links on a links page. This is also a big misconception... Yes, a link on a page with only 5 links is better than getting a link on a page with 30+ links.

BUT... as I've said. Any link is better than no link. Do not pass these requests up.

If you do, you're making a BIG mistake!

So, with all this said about reciprocal linking, the main idea is that...

Getting A link is better than getting NO link. Don't pass up link requests just because they're not exactly what you're looking for. Any link will help your rankings, as long as the website you're exchanging with is not banned. (**Gray** Google Page Rank)

The screenshot shows a section titled "WELCOME TO RANKREADY" with a blue header. Below it is a "FEATURED WEBSITES" section with a "View all" link. Three featured websites are listed:

- BollywoodInsight.com**: www.bollywoodinsight.com, Arts and Humanities > Movies. Description: Bollywood News | Bollywood Movies Reviews | Bollywood Trailers. Links: Request link Exchange, Request OWL - \$2.
- MyGamingDen**: www.mygamingden.com, Recreation > Games. Description: Video Games PC PlayStation 2 Xbox 360 Wii PS3 GameCube PSP DS GBA PS2 PlayStation 3. Links: Request link Exchange, Request OWL - \$2.
- My Metacafe**: www.mymetacafe.com, Arts and Humanities > Entertainment. Description: Serving the World's Best Videos |

At RankReady.com, you can have reciprocal linking with several other websites to boost your website Page Rank.

One-Way Linking

One-way linking takes two formats – submitting your website's URL and description to a web directory or a link directory on a website, and buying links on web pages. I'll discuss link purchase a little later, but the key factor to note in one-way linking is that you don't

have to link back to the website linking to you.
How does that help you?

- Less **outbound links** per page
- One-way links receive **greater importance** than reciprocal links from search engines – this has a lot to do with deterring the power of search engine optimizers to unfairly inflate a website’s rankings.

Bollywood Wallpapers http://wallpapers.bollywoodinsight.com Recreation > Wallpapers	Advanced	No	
AutoMobile Blogs http://www.autozinsight.com Recreation > Autos	Advanced	Yes	
BollywoodInsight.com http://www.bollywoodinsight.com Arts and Humanities > Movies	Advanced	Yes	
FlashedBlogs Community http://www.flashedblogs.com Computers > Internet	Advanced	No	
FlashedCoder http://www.flashedcoder.com Internet > World Wide Web	Advanced	Yes	

At RankReady.com, you will find tons of websites having PR5 or above for One-way linking.

3 way link exchanges

A great way to get one-way links through RankReady is by doing, what is called, “3 way link exchanges”. The way this works is let’s say there are 3 websites involved:

- Website A (your website)
- Website B (your website)
- Website C (your link partner’s website)

You use your Website A to link to All other websites. In this example, you would link your Website A to Website C.

Then, Automatically Website C will link back to your Website B. Website B is the website you’re getting links to, but you’re not linking back from Website B. You’re linking back from your Website A.

What’s happened here is all links are 1 way links! You can do this within RankReady if you’re interested in also getting 1 way links. Notice I said, “ALSO”. You shouldn’t only get links choosing 1 method. You should get link any way you can. Use all the methods I’m teaching.

One-way links are often the subject of purchase – website owners routinely aim to sell advertising space on their high-ranking websites (by high-ranking I mean websites with high Page Rank). It is not uncommon to see websites with a Page Rank of 5 offering one-way main page links for \$20 a month. In contrast, a website with a PR 9 can probably charge several hundred dollars per month on a single text link.

While the price is exorbitant, it goes a long way towards showing the sort of problems webmasters and search engines have come to face because of the exploding industry that is being built around link popularity.

The critical question here is: **Is all the money worth it?**

Buy Your Way to the Top

Webmasters everywhere fall into the trap of “the quick fix” – shortcuts to quickly getting high rankings in search engines. The problem is that there are only two shortcuts:

- **Black-Hat SEO** – involves using dubious techniques that increase your search engine rankings by ‘tricking’ the search engine spider that your website (or web pages) is more important than they actually are.

- **Buying your way in** – buying links on a variety of websites to dramatically increase your link-popularity.

The “buy-in” strategy requires a lot of financial investment – effective link-building strategies earmark anywhere between 30 and 50 links to acquire per month (not much more, and definitely not less). This is because buying links invariably assumes the following:

- Links in directory listings and link directories are not **optimal inbound links** because they fail one or more of the “**quality**” criteria.
- One-way links are more important to search engines than reciprocal links.
- Links have the secondary purpose of drawing traffic from the website.
- More is definitely better, especially if you can get quality packaged in.

As webmasters continually make the mistake of using Page Rank as the defining factor of determining link quality (it is important definitely, but not more than half of the whole process), getting 30 one-way links from PR 4 and PR 5 websites can cost you anywhere from \$300 to \$600. If you factor in the fact that this is a **monthly** cost, then you face the situation where you will continuously have to pay higher and higher amounts of money to get to the top.

Buying-in to link popularity is **expensive** – it is traditional to adopt a buy-in policy for a handful of high ranking links (say 20 to 30 links spread between PR 5 and PR 7) for a while until the other avenues of link-building can bridge the gap and support your high search engine rankings.

Buying Smart

The key to buying links is to find a quality link exchange website (you can find many on the Internet – just go to Google and type “link exchange”) where you can view and contact other webmasters like yourself who are also looking to exchange links or sell advertising space on their websites.

Why go for such a website, instead of going after webmasters individually?

- A link-buying or link-exchange website will put you in touch with scores of other webmasters and give you access to prices and deals that you may never have

gotten on your own.

- The top link brokers keep stringent quality checks on their link offers – meaning that you will not have to worry about banned or penalized websites.
- Link brokers offer a safe and secure transaction mechanism, and can ensure that all parties live up to their deals. If you've ever been burnt by a webmaster that takes your money but removes the link after a few days, you'll know what I'm talking about.
- You can not only improve your link popularity but also get maximum link value for each link by hunting down relevant categories related to your niche.
- Take the grunt work out of link building and let professionals handle it. This will mean more time for you to focus on the quality of your site / service / product. Buying in to link popularity isn't for everyone. You have to match the links with your needs, and you need to look out for the best prices. However, having a link broker do most of the legwork can save hours of your link building campaigns. If you are looking to build your link popularity, and if you are willing to buy smart, visit RankReady.com and learn first-hand how powerful buying links can be for your rankings.

Passive Link-Building

Passive link-building in **unpredictable** – you can never quantify or monetize such an effort, and because of this exact problem most webmasters choose not to rely on passive link-building.

On the other hand, there are real-world examples of websites that have soared into popularity by mainly using passive link-building – [Boing Boing](#) – an insanely popular blog focused on covering and highlighting quality web content (as well as giving a contemporary take on life) – is the perfect example of a website that has gained popularity through **word-of-mouth** and **quality content**, and not through active link-building techniques.

Passive link-building is all about natural link-building and as such does not involve any specific technique.

Natural link-building

Natural link-building is in fact the cornerstone of site-to-site linking as search engines understand and define it. As I've mentioned earlier, search engines justify using link popularity as a **ranking tool** on the argument that good quality sites will naturally attract links – people will link voluntarily to good quality websites without prompting or active link-building campaigns. In the same vein, poor-quality websites will not have mass appeal within their niche and thus will not get so many links.

Link popularity has been severely abused in the past few years, ever since Google initiated Page Rank and focused on link popularity. However, natural link-building is still a powerful phenomenon and if you browse through websites of a niche, it is quite likely

that you will find links pointing to an authority website.

The lesson? Even in a world where people are trying to buy search engine rankings with link popularity (and failing, I might add), webmasters and online business owners continue to **link to “useful” content** on the Internet and continue to provide their visitors with “resources”.

The only hurdle with natural link-building is that the emphasis on building the quality of your website, and not your link popularity (and letting that build by itself).

Factors affecting Link Quality

There are higher quality links, but if you have the opportunity to get any link, take it. No matter if it has not an extremely high quality. Remember, any link is better than no link. The quality of links to a website is affected by several very specific factors, and I'll try to cover them in detail here. We are essentially concerned with:

Quality of individual links

This is the importance of the website the link is coming from. The quality of a link is based on several factors, including:

- The **importance** of the website.
- The ‘optimization’ of the content on that website (i.e. the **quality of content**).
- The **number of outbound links** on the linking page.

Quantity of links

Usually, when we are talking about the quantity of inbound links to a website we are talking about link popularity, but here the case is a bit different.

Here, when we talk about the quantity of links, we are talking about the following:

- The number of links from **one website**.
- The number of links from the **same IP address** (that is, from websites that are hosted on the same shared hosting – this is further discussed in “Safe Practices”).

Diversity of back links

It is not enough to have high link popularity; the links must come from different websites as well. This is to dissuade black-hat techniques where webmasters would build up a network of high-ranking websites and then use these “important” websites to quickly build up the link popularity of a new website.

Diversity of your back links will involve:

- A general measure of how much the IP addresses of your linking websites vary.
- The variations in anchor text for your inbound links.
- The variation of the type of linking websites – not all websites should be of a particular category. An example for this could be that for your soccer goods website, you shouldn't just have soccer websites linking to you; expand your reach to general sports goods and information websites as well.

<p>✦ Arts and Humanities (11)</p> <p>Entertainment (4), Movies (2), Music (2), Crafts (1), Graphic Design (1), Literature (1)</p>	<p>✦ News and Media (3)</p> <p>Breaking News (1), Entertainment (1), Television (1)</p>
<p>✦ Business and Industry (33)</p> <p>Internet Marketing (7), Consumer Electronics (3), Finance (3), Manufacturing (3), Consulting (2), Telecommunications (2), Work From Home (2), Clothing (1), Health Care (1), Information (1), Insurance (1), Jobs & Careers (1), Marketing (1), Opportunities (1), Real Estate (1), Services (1), Transportation (1), Travel (1)</p>	<p>✦ Recreation (15)</p> <p>Gaming console (3), Travel (3), Autos (2), Games (2), Boating (1), Gambling (1), Hobbies (1), Motorcycles (1), Wallpapers (1)</p>
<p>✦ Computers (28)</p> <p>Internet (9), Programming (3), Web Design (3), Directories (2), Games (2), Software (2), Web Hosting (2), Advertising and Marketing (1), Consultants (1), Hardware (1), Operating Systems (1), Technical Guides (1)</p>	<p>✦ Shopping (8)</p> <p>Clothing (2), Gifts (2), Home and Garden (2), Auctions (1), General Merchandise (1)</p>
<p>✦ Health and Fitness (14)</p> <p>General Health (3), Nutrition (3), Weight Loss (3), Health and Beauty (2), Alternative Medicine (1), Fitness (1), Personal Development (1)</p>	<p>✦ Society (9)</p> <p>Dating (2), Food and Drink (2), Magazines (1), Relationships (1), Religion (1), Style (1), Weddings (1)</p>
<p>✦ Internet (5)</p> <p>World Wide Web (4), Business and Economics (1)</p>	<p>✦ Sports (0)</p>

At RankReady.com, we have loads of quality websites listed under different categories. So you can have “diversity of linkbacks”.

Anchor Text

Basic link building techniques talk about putting your most important keywords into the anchor text of the links pointing to your website. However, to optimize your link popularity, you should aim to **vary the anchor text** a few times throughout your link building campaigns – most notably Google has started to pick up on this, and this is yet another measure to fight black hat techniques and encourage natural link-building.

Other factors

What you must have noticed here is that most of these factors are inter-linked – the quality of individual inbound links is determined in turn by site quality, anchor text and link relevancy while the overall quality of your back links is determined by IP range diversity and specific link quantity issues.

The end result is that while increasing your link popularity remains relatively simple, improving your search engine rankings through a comprehensive linking strategy has become an **increasingly complex task** – the main reason for this is that search engines want to encourage webmasters to focus on content first, and promotion (letting the world know about your website) second, and not vice versa. The end goal of search engine technology is steady: provide relevant, quality content.

Good Links / Bad Links

There is a lot of discussion towards determining what constitutes a “**good**” link and what makes up a “**bad**” link.

Basically, a “good” link is a link that fulfills the “quality” criteria – but this definition is a bit vague and repetitive, and for webmasters looking to get a head-start on their link-building campaigns there is a need for more objective, verifiable methods of categorization.

For this purpose, I’ve outlined the following factors that should enable a webmaster to quickly judge whether a link from a particular website or web page is “good” or “bad”. I also **seriously** recommend that you read the follow-up notes after this immediate

discussion.

Page Rank

Page Rank is the single most visible measure of a website's worth. Whether you are a webmaster looking for links for your website, or a professional SEO hunting links for your clients, you will invariably go for that **little green bar** showing in your toolbar for every website.

The danger (and this has been documented by many elite SEO experts, most notably during the recent Page Rank "fade out" of Memorial Weekend, May 2005) is that people tend to attach **far too much importance** to a metric that Google has progressively given less importance to.

Today Google is implementing changes to its algorithm that tend to focus a lot more on relevancy and content quality rather than static Page Rank. Add to this Google's internal implementation of Trust Rank, and you have a situation where there is a lot of noise about nothing.

And yet, Page Rank remains an integral part of determining the value of a link. My advice is to definitely factor in the Page Rank but not to make it the end-all and be-all of your campaign. Instead, use Page Rank for the following:

- Determining if the website has earned any **search engine penalty** (grayed-out instead of a white or green bar)
- Establishing a ball-park estimate of how important such a link could be for your website, **provided** every other factor falls into place as well. And that is the key – Page Rank really comes into play when the following criteria (content quality, relevancy and outbound links) are satisfactorily fulfilled.

Content Quality

The quality of a website's content is in turn determined by two things:

- **On-site optimization** – this involves maintaining keyword density, proper site maps, integral site-linking and tightly related content.
- **Off-site optimization** – the popularity of a web page – its link popularity. The quality quotient of the linking website is of great importance to search engines, especially Google. The easy way to determine whether the website contains quality content is use the litmus test of **content vs. advertising**.
 - If a website is obviously built for earning money – such as revenue off AdSense – then it will show through keyword stuffing and awkward reading of the site content.
 - On the other hand, if the website is built to provide content – or to use content as a gateway to sell services or products – then that will be immediately visible from going through the website (usually a quick read of the main page is enough, but you might want to look at some deeper content pages).

A **big problem** with SEO services is that links are promised through an evaluation of Page Rank – and not by determining the quality of the linking website. If you hire an SEO service, make it clear that you want quality links, and ensure that you follow up by putting websites through this litmus test yourself.

Outbound Links per Page

The concept of monitoring the number of outbound links from a linking page is based on how Page Rank works. In essence, a web page gets its Page Rank from the sum of the Page Ranks of the web pages linking to it. **How is that Page Rank transferred?**

On any particular page, its Page Rank is equally divided between all the outbound links. In practice, link pages tend to have a lot of outgoing links, something which can negatively impact on the outgoing Page Rank.

Another aspect of this issue is that pages with a large amount of outbound links are invariably pages that are built for the sole purpose of link exchange (and thus for an artificial increase in a website's rankings). While there are no clear statements of penalty, it is an accepted SEO practice to not acquire links from web pages that have more than a certain amount of outbound links. This figure ranges from 10 to 40, but in any case, the lesser the number of outbound links, the better it is for you.

Links should, hypothetically, be also a **source of traffic**. Too many links will confuse visitors and force your link to compete with several others.

Search Engine Penalties

The most obvious reckoning that a website has suffered a search engine penalty is to monitor the Page Rank – a penalized website will have a greyed-out bar. And yet there are other types of penalties more subtle than Page Rank.

A Sandboxed website has a **soft penalty** imposed on it – this will be evident if the website you see has high link popularity (large number of back links) and is a big website in terms of content, but has low search engine rankings. Such a link will still help you. On the other hand, sandboxed websites are always looking for more link exchange partners, so they will usually be more willing to exchange links.

Poor on-site and off-site optimization can drain away the website's **link value**. While the change may not be visible, beware of any website that has a "bad" reputation in search engines – either through spam-filled content (content for the purpose of revenue) or because banned or other "bad" websites link to it.

It is fairly hard to spot sandboxed or penalized websites immediately. This will involve a bit of digging and **background research**, but is ultimately more rewarding as links from websites with low or negative link value will badly damage your search engine rankings. The only thing that needs to be spent some time on, is to determine whether the website is penalized or not. Everything else can be done in under a minute (total), so checking out a website for link compatibility should not take more than 4-5 minutes in total. If you find yourself taking much more time than that, then there is obviously something wrong with your approach.

Safe Practices

Over a period of time, as search engine algorithms have evolved and grown more refined, search engines have begun to mark out shady or "spammy" optimization techniques. In

short, using these methods is **likely to be hazardous** for your search engine rankings. In a worst-case scenario, your website could be dropped from the search engine's index, and cleaning your website and getting it re-indexed is another hassle altogether. Instead of detailing every bad trick in the book, I'll take a different approach and tell you the things that you **SHOULD** be doing.

Avoiding Over-Optimization

In the quest of high search engine rankings, you are quite likely to err towards making simple **optimization mistakes** – in fact, if you'll notice, these are lessons I've touched upon earlier in this guide as well. Listing them here should serve to reinforce their actual purpose as well as their importance.

Firstly, maintain a gradual, **low-intensity**, long-term approach to your link-building. There is no point in getting 2000 links in the first couple of weeks – unless your website is one of those truly spectacular websites that everyone is dying to see and use, a rapid increase in your link popularity -building puts a red flag on your website (and causes search engines to take a much closer look at the nature and quality of your back links). Whether the process is automated or manual it is not known, but the end result is that artificially inflating your link popularity far too much is a sure signal of “black-hat” SEO for search engines, and results in a penalty, either an extended stay in the Sandbox or more severe, search engine ranking penalties.

Secondly, you should allow for **link text variation**. This principle stems from the underlying natural link-building concept – people will “want” to link to your website – as such it is likely that not all links will have the same anchor text.

On the other hand, link building results in the website sending out just one version of link details to their link partners, and this demonstrates that the linking is in fact artificial. Vary your anchor text slightly, and spread out your keywords across link descriptions as well as within the anchor text.

Avoiding “Spam” Linking

A recent development in **link spamming** is to post in forums, guest books and blogs with the explicit intent of getting links to your website. The practice is doomed to fail, because unless the context is extremely relevant (in which case forums provide an acceptable alternative) and the linking is not explicit (you shouldn't just stick your link in everywhere – match it with the current discussion, content and tie it in, otherwise leave it out.), the link will only serve to harm your website's rankings

Link Popularity Resources

On its own, link-building is an effort-consuming, **repetitive** task. Also, there are several grey areas which need to be clarified for beginners and experienced search engine marketers alike.

The following collection of resources will go a long way towards arming you with the **right knowledge** about link building, and will give you the right tools to really boost your search engine rankings.

Conclusion

With all of this said, I can summarize everything into a few sentences...

You now know that link popularity is one of the two most important things used to rank well in all of the major search engines. You've learned that both getting reciprocal links using credible software products AND buying links from credible link brokers are the wave of the future.

Combine those 2 techniques with solid content and you're bound to succeed in the search engine war. I wish you all the best. Now get out there and start dominating those search engines!

JIN

<http://www.RankReady.com>