

9.8 Generating inbound links

<http://www.websuburb.com.au/HelpDesk/SearchEngines/Inboundlinks/tabid/773/Default.aspx>

9.8.1 Internet Marketing and Public Relations

- Generating inbound links is the on-line equivalent of marketing and public relations. You need to budget time to cultivate and build on-line links in the same way as you undertake networking and other marketing efforts in the non-virtual world. Don't expect instant results.
- Acquiring a dozen good quality links in a year would put you in the top quartile of websites.
- When you build a site with WebSuburb, we get you started by creating a link from our website or other appropriate sites in our stable.
- Someone who declines your request may well reconsider later if they see that your site is active and growing.
- Target your link requests, explain the benefit to the prospective link partner of what you are offering in return and make it easy by sending the exact HTML code you want and suggesting the page you want the link from.
- Start with an email to the webmaster and consider following up with a phone call or letter. Tap in to your network of industry contacts as these are the best quality links to have.

9.8.2 Internal links

- The most obvious place to start is to cross reference pages within your site. The smart way to do this is to include the link within the call to action on the page. The significant advantage of this is that you have control of both the number of links and the quality of the linking text (see 9.4.8) E.g.
- You inherit PageRank© from pages that link to you and reciprocally you bleed PageRank© with outbound links. To staunch the loss of PageRank©, add the 'nofollow' attribute to external links: `link text`
- It is a good idea to concentrate your internal links on the most important pages on your site.

9.8.3 Google sitemap

WebSuburb adds a module to your site that automatically generates a Google sitemap. E.g. www.websuburb.com.au/BTBGoogleSiteMap.axd. WebSuburb will arrange the site verification and linking with Google when you are ready to make your first sitemap submission. The advantage of this approach is that Google will periodically check back to this page to get the latest sitemap. As you add new pages to the site, Google will automatically be notified.

9.8.4 Forums

Forums are website pages where users record comments for others to read and respond to. E.g. www.eatability.com.au is a great site about dining out experiences. Forums are extremely popular for technical websites, enabling users to ask questions and other users to respond with guidance or suggestions. E.g. www.dotnetnuke.com/tabid/795/Default.aspx

Search Forum Home			
DotNetNuke Forums			
Forums	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Aggregated			
 All Public Forums An aggregated view of all public forum threads.	10840	37621	Today @ 7:18 PM clody

Figure: Forum example

To find a relevant forum try a search query commencing with the word forum.

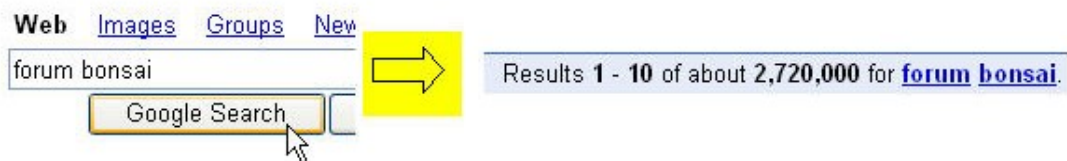


Figure: Google search for ‘forum’ and results

An anomaly with popular forums is that, due to the PageRank© formula (See 9.6) you will inherit the least amount of PageRank© from the most popular forums. Participating in popular forums does offer good credibility and some opportunities to inherit PageRank©. The techniques:

- Participate in well established forums related to your business or industry. Most forum users strongly reject participants who blatantly plug their own business or website. There are two techniques here that are appropriate.
 - Include a reference to a relevant page on your own site in your forum response e.g. “... the detail is on this page ([www.websuburb.com.au/help desk](http://www.websuburb.com.au/helpdesk)) on our site”.
 - Include an appropriate signature to all of your forum posts E.g.



Figure: Forum signature example, note how the author has included both his website address and keywords in to the link

Note: Forum participants often include a small image (an “avatar”) as or as part of their signature. Avatars are usually caricatures, simple images or bizarre fantasy figures not realistic photos.

- Start your own forum. WebSuburb can load a forum module to your website. This approach requires a significant amount of effort. You still need to publicise the forum and forums only tend to be successful when there are a number of participants (I.e. usually more than 50). If you don’t have the time or resources to run an effective forum then it is probably better not to have one. You will appreciate that if you are able to establish a popular forum then you will achieve significant traffic and large numbers of links in to your site.

9.8.5 BLOGS

- BLOG is an acronym for WebLog or an on-line journal. E.g. www.craigslist.com started out as a community blog and now gets more than 3 billion page views per month. The strategy is essentially similar to that for forums.
- Most blogs' allow the commenter to add their name and signature.
- WebSuburb can add a blog module to your website. You may allow visitors to add comments and similarly you may find it more efficient to add comments to a blog in your field that is already well supported.
- Suggestions are to make postings 2-3 times per week [to keep visitors returning] and around 250 words so that the search engine can figure out what the article is about.

9.8.6 Web Ring

A web ring is a group of related web pages linked to each other in a sequence that forms a ring. The website displays a link to the web ring E.g.



Figure: Example of webring icon and information

Use Google, search for “webring” and research for reputable webrings to join.

9.8.7 Automatic directories and Link Engines

- Link farms
Are websites setup specifically for the purpose of generating links. Google is known to consider link farms in a poor light. Since PR is diluted by the # of outbound links, the benefit received from a link farm is debateable. Google will not penalise your site for an inbound link because you have no control over inbound links, however your site may be penalised if you create an outbound link to a known link farm. E.g. linkmetro dot com
- Directories
Are websites that consist of catalogues of other websites. The most well known directory is Google, however hundreds (perhaps thousands) of directories. Many of these are focused on niche markets or use various techniques or technologies to create their databases. Google is known to visit these other directories to scout around for new content that it hasn't yet identified. Egg. DMOZ Open Directory Project
- Link submission sites
Are websites that claim to be able to lodge your website information with the hundreds of other directories besides Google. The benefit of such a service is the speed, expertise and relatively low cost of executing such work. e.g. www.researchbuzz.com

9.8.8 Measuring Inbound Links

To find out how many inbound links you have and where they are coming from use the Google home page and enter link: www.websuburb.com.au (i.e. your page). This recommended search seems to produce a limited set of results compared to the following search syntax. “www.yourdomain.com.au –site:www.yourdomain.com.au”

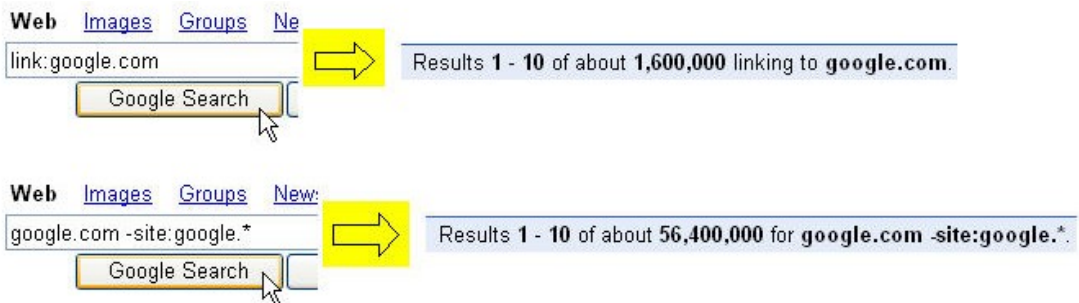


Figure: Comparison of link: and -site: search

9.8.9 Tracking performance

Refer to the website stats from your ISP to measure the effectiveness of your inbound links. Focus on increasing the quality site links that enjoy a user profile that best suits your target market

Links from an external page (other web sites except search engines)	
17 different pages-url	Hits
http://narrabeengolf.com.au	235
http://narrabeengolf.com.au/GolfAcademy/GolfTuition/tabid/60/Default.asp...	14
http://narrabeengolf.com.au/MiniGolf/BirthdayParties/tabid/56/Default.as...	9
http://narrabeengolf.com.au/Default.aspx	5
http://www.kidspot.com.au/search-kidspot.asp	4
http://www.activities4kids.com.au/ActivityDisplay.aspx	3
http://by109w.bay109.mail.live.com/mail/ApplicationMain_11.00.0006.0075...	3
http://narrabeengolf.com.au/Prices/tabid/66/Default.aspx	3
http://assetmanagementinformation.com/assetmanagementrss.xml	1
http://vivisimo.com/search	1
http://assetmanagementinformation.com	1
http://www.hydivest.com	1
http://www.dogpile.com/info.dogpl.tvl/search/redir.htm	1
http://assetmanagementinformation.com/infocenter.html	1

Figure: Measuring hit counts from linked sites

The next step in Search Engines is Content

<http://www.websuburb.com.au/HelpDesk/SearchEngines/SEOcontent/tabid/774/Default.aspx>