

7 SEO Techniques That Google Smashed in 2007

The SEO playbook changes fast. Really fast. Best practices shift on a monthly basis, and time-honored methods can become obsolete and dangerous – literally overnight. Here are a few SEO staples that went out of style in 2007:

1. Reciprocal links. In May of 2007, Realtors who relied heavily on reciprocal links started to sob as -30 penalties were dished out by Google, harming their business. It became clear that the decade-old tradition of reciprocal links programs was over. Done. Finished. Time to get one way links.

2. The "site: * -sljktf" command** (to show the supplemental index results). Google's supplemental index used to be handy for finding out which pages on your own site were doing poorly and needed some extra TLC, and spammers had their own uses for it. For a while in 2007, the supplemental index still existed with no obvious markings. Now it got merged into one main, regular index.

3. Directory links. Buying directory links is another decade-old SEO tradition that Google took a pretty big swipe at when it devalued the PageRank of hundreds of lower-quality, made-for-webmasters directories this year.

4. Open link brokers and link networks. Not so long ago, it was possible to pick up the phone and call a major text link broker with open inventory and buy your way to good rankings. Now sites that openly sell links are coming under heavy fire. Top-secret brokers and hand-picked, carefully negotiated and camouflaged buys are the paid way in 2008.

5. Sponsored blog post networks. Pay-per-post bloggers also got whacked. Bloggers who accept payments are going to have to do their best to look legitimate and be undetectable.

6. Owning the SERPs with subdomains. This common reputation management and branding technique was recently declared obsolete when Google announced that there would be no more than 2 results from any one domain served up in the search results. However, real life searches show that some companies are still getting away with it. [Note: Nick Wilsdon clarified this issue and provided this link on Google's treatment of subdomains]

7. 10 Blue Links. It used to be the gospel that there were 10 identical search results for any given query and there was some kind of way to rank. Now that Google's universal search includes video, audio, news, blogs and local listings and mammoth sites like Wikipedia and Knol are sure to rank for a few of the slots on popular searches – MFA and thin-affiliates are in trouble. Webmasters can't take being able to rank for granted anymore. Even more remarkable, more linkworthy, more multi-media content is in order for 2008. Quality over quantity.