

ILLEGAL SEO TECHNIQUES

DANGEROUS, UNETHICAL STRATEGIES THAT WILL GET YOUR SITE BLACKLISTED BY SEARCH ENGINES

Provided by ClearVue Consulting

LINK FARMS

Also known as Spamexing or Spamdexing.

A link farm is a series of websites created solely for housing gratuitous links that point to a collection of websites. It can also be a network of websites interlinking with each other.

Such websites are considered illegal in the eyes of Google and major search engines because they aim to achieve high rankings for websites that haven't earned those rankings through good content and overall quality.

As a strategy, utilizing link farms, or spamdexing a search engine, is highly dangerous.

Even if your website has great content, if you or your SEO consultant use this technique, your website will still get penalized or banned because the engines figure that if you did have good content you wouldn't resort to such sneaky tactics designed to trick them.

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST IT

When an SEO professional tells you that he or she will secure incoming links for you, ask them to tell you specifically how they will do so. The correct answer is that they will target

specific, pre-existing and established websites to gain an incoming link from them to you (in most cases without having to link back to them).

If a professional tells you that they will build you hundreds or thousands of pages across different domains that will link to your website, do NOT work with them as this will severely cripple your website.

Also periodically search your domain name in the major search engines to see which sites are pointing to you. If you see anything out of the ordinary, such as websites whose domains are extremely long or gibberish (lots of numbers and random or inappropriate words) or pages that are simply long lists of links, approach your SEO professional about getting your site removed from these pages and find out how they appeared there in the first place.

DOORWAY PAGES

Also known as Advertising Pages, Jump Pages, Gateway Pages, etc.

Doorway Pages are a form of landing page that is designed solely for the search engine and oftentimes isn't even viewable to the human visitor. These pages often use a redirect script

that automatically points the visitor to another page on the website without the human visitor ever seeing the doorway page. This is also known as cloaking and is clearly defined as an illegal practice by Google and other search engines.

The only time a landing page is acceptable by search engines is if it is in the form of an informative, well written article that human visitors read and enjoy, where they are not tricked into clicking or being redirected to the website's main pages.

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST IT

Make sure you understand exactly what kind of pages are being added to your website and be sure to look at most of them.

Ask your SEO professional point-blank whether any of these pages will automatically redirect to your website's main page. If they say yes, then they are breaking the rules and are well aware of it, and we recommend you do NOT work with such an individual or company.

It doesn't matter if they say they use a special javascript or other redirect that is "legal" or acceptable to Google. This is never the case and though Google may not know about that particular trick yet, it will find out fast enough and your site will get penalized as a result.

KEYWORD STUFFING

One of the original illegal SEO techniques, keyword stuffing occurs when you load a webpage full of particular keywords, either in

the meta tags, other script tags, or in the content itself.

This is different from optimizing the page for particular keywords because the same words are being repeated dozens or hundreds of times in no credible or informative way.

Keywords are hidden several ways, for instance some people will make the text the same color as the background so search engines see it, but no human visitors can. Others will hide keywords in script tags. Still others yet will use CSS to position keywords outside of your visible screen area, again so that no human visitors can see it - but search engines can.

Though on the surface, using such techniques might sound like an attractive idea. However, search engines can detect whether a keyword is being used properly and will penalize or ban your site for using any of the above techniques to stuff keywords into your site.

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST IT

Often times, the only way you can know if your site has been stuffed with keywords is to view the source code of your website (visit your site in your favorite browser, click "View" and then "Source Code." A page of HTML will display.

If you see the same keywords repeated hundreds of times anywhere, then your page has been stuffed and will be considered in violation of every search engine's rules.

SCRAPER PAGES

Also known as Auto Generated Pages.

Scraper pages are those comprised of search results or content automatically pulled from dozens or hundreds of websites or search engine results. This is a form of plagiarism as no part of the scraper page is original content.

Most often, such sites are used to display Google AdSense Ads or other ads that pay the site owner every time a visitor clicks on it. However search engines have gotten very good at banning such sites from their results and human visitors can detect them easily as well.

Scraper sites are easy to spot as they are largely illogical. They are snippets of other webpage content, or search results, and therefore have no sensible point and do not make sense when read.

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST IT

As with other illegal techniques, it's important to first ask your SEO professional directly whether they will employ such unethical techniques. Then you must monitor their work. Make sure you have access to your website's hosting service so that you can view all pages that are hosted on your site's domain.

Periodically view pages at random to be sure they do not contain this or other illegal content. Also get reports of your site's rankings and search the keywords you rank for. Click through from the search results and check the landing page's source code and content for anything fishy or inappropriate.