

# How to Avoid Hidden SEO Dangers What You Don't Know Will Hurt You

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This paper provides a detailed description of the hidden dangers in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) that could be harming your rankings (and your traffic) right now. Whether you handle your SEO in-house, are already working with an SEO Firm, or are just about to hire a firm – these are facts that you **need** to know to protect your site's future. This paper covers the history of the hidden dangers, and outlines the hidden dangers that exist today, concluding with solutions for avoiding these hidden dangers.

## Top SEO Rankings Are Desired by All, Elusive & Confusing to Most. Worst of All: SEO Without the Proper Knowledge Can Backfire!

Nothing is more frustrating than designing the perfect site, getting your shopping cart and autoresponder all set up, knowing you have a **great** product or service to sell; and then sitting there watching as your web stats record a only handful of hits on your site daily.

You've invested time, money and emotion in this website and the only piece missing is the traffic. This is when excitement can begin to fade, and concerns about your website set in.

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Delivers Traffic. Traffic that is Searching for Exactly What You Have to Offer.

With 84.8% of Internet users finding the websites they frequent and shop from by using search engines, it becomes clear that you need to tap into that traffic. Keyword tools can guide you in selecting the targeted keywords that people will use to find your site – leading those visitors right to your homepage.

After determining that SEO is the most recommended and beneficial course of action, you feel better – but no less confused.

At best, SEO is confusing. At its worst, SEO is a maddening exercise in losing money and time.

The world is buzzing with talk about Search Engines (the Big 3: Google, Yahoo and MSN, specifically). Large corporations begin to realize search engines

make online shopping easier and therefore must face a decrease in their store traffic.

Everyone wants a piece of the action, but even with all this buzz – there is so much that is not being said. There are specifics that are just out of your reach – making tackling SEO for yourself next to impossible.

### **Hiring an SEO Firm Alleviates the Stress, and Drives Traffic to Your Site.**

Going with the professionals seems to be the choice of the vast majority of small to medium sized business owners, as well as large corporations (more recently).

Hiring an SEO Firm places your site in the hands of experts – ensuring the use of successful and ethical techniques. Left with a feeling of satisfaction at having your SEO underway, you are now free to focus on other areas of your business.

### **There's Something Else You Should Know: Not All SEO Firms are Created Equal.**

The landscape of SEO has changed. SEO as an industry has grown over the years; it has evolved into a large industry with many little niches. There are those that focus on links, those that focus on keyword rich text, those that focus on Meta tags, and those that focus on a combination of all of those techniques, as well as conversion strategies.

Finding an SEO Firm suddenly becomes a headache that you didn't anticipate.

What is the solution?

Knowledge. Knowledge is Power. That will never stop being true.

The more you know, the better the decisions you make.

With all the buzz out there, you need to get your hands on information, find out exactly what it is that no one is saying.

### **What No One is Saying, and Many Aren't Even Thinking, Is Exactly What You Need to Know. And, We Are Going to Tell You.**

With most Firms, the focus is on results – getting the best rankings, getting the most rankings. That’s great. It should be. **BUT not with total disregard for the future – the future of the industry and of your site.**

## **Are You (or Your SEO Firm) Sabotaging Your SEO Success?**

You could be – and you don’t even know it.

In order to fully understand this, let’s look at a few key events in SEO, not in chronological order -- just by highlighting a few key events.

Doorway pages were the hottest thing – everyone used them, and they worked!  
**Until Google caught on that people were just trying to trick them, and they banned the pages. Mouths dropped in shock, as top ranked sites dropped from sight.**

Reciprocal links were all the rage. Emails flying: “You link to me, I’ll link to you”. Everyone was fast becoming friends and creating an interlinked information network.

**Until Google caught on that this isn’t a true representation of how popular your site is, people are just creating link farms and mass-generating “faux link popularity”. More mass droppage of sites from the SERPs.**

One-way links are definitely *the* way to go. It’s exactly what Google wants, and if we buy a link from another website, Google will see it as a viable one-way link to my site. Who says you can’t buy love. I’ve got Google lovin’ me.

**Until Google realizes there are sites with high PageRank, making a nice monthly income for linking to sites that have not earned the link – the faux link popularity issue is just perpetuated.**

With some all of the link confusion, it is a constant source for debate: reciprocal is OK, as long as it is relevant and from a high PR site. One way is the only way to go, but **only** if it is relevant and from a high PR site. What is high PR anyway is it anything above 3 or 4 or 5?

With all the questions flying, attention seemed to go back to a new and improved type of doorway page. One that includes links to other sites (resources) underneath text for your site.

This is great – this technique is legit, you are providing value to people by having helpful links on your site, and the search engines just happen to view those links as keyword rich, so they boost your rankings.

It made sense to the engines, and was easy to do. Great – we’ve finally found a way to create some great pages that Google likes.

**Until Google sees the internet infiltrated with sites that are nothing but mass-produced pages with no customization. Resource pages spit out by software, with no real content. That ended the “resource page hay day”.**

Blogging & Pinging is “it”. Everyone can create a free blog and then blog and ping like crazy. Drive spiders to your blog when you ping, they follow links in your posts to your main site, and next thing you know you can control Googlebot, and Yahoo Slurp. With a few posts, you can plan on the bots swinging by to pick up more pages in your site. Cool, things are happening now!

**Until Google realizes people have programs doing auto-posts and auto-pings and it’s not the most relevant or original content. Google wises up – (those still trying to get away with automated blogging and pinging, you’re wasting your time).**

The link debates rage on; content is still king; and people want rankings more than ever. What’s next?

1. RSS Feed – You can create content and send it out to the world to read with their preferred viewer. What an opportunity to get your message out there! You can also pull feeds into your site to bulk up content. Amazing.
2. Enter the Press Release and Article Syndication. Fabulous – write informative articles and submit them around the internet – the benefit is two-fold – each article will drive traffic to your site, and the links within the article will count as links for your site!

The Press Release is killer too. Write an informative, keyword rich press release and get it sent out to thousands of media outlets online. You could count on 30 days worth of traffic from one release. Not to mentioned, press releases get picked up in the News engines and the regular engines too.

Great – so what’s the problem? Any current “hot technique” is only a passing fad.

Look at most of the techniques that are now considered “black hat”. They would have been OK long term and worked well in moderation, but instead they are used and abused and killed. Thereby sabotaging your SEO success.

Let me talk specifically about RSS Feeds, Press Releases and Articles.

RSS Feed is great. Pull in news that is relevant and comes from different sources, showing different opinions. Fabulous! Use a few feeds to enhance the

already strong content on your site and this tactic should remain beneficial long term.

However, what is really happening is people are saying “Great, I don’t even have to write content; I’ll just pull in feeds and bulk up my site that way”

Now you can imagine Google saying, “*OK these guys are abusing this technique and trying to fool us – too bad, no more RSS Feeds*”. And those legitimate users are now suffering the loss of this fabulous technique.

Even scarier is Article Syndication – this one is accidentally being misused and abused. People aren’t considering the future for this technique, and the future for their site.

In order to understand the overuse and abuse, you need to understand how it benefits you, and you need to understand the SPECIFICS of what the engines look for.

<b>Perception:</b> Articles provide links to your site. Google likes links. Score!	<b>Reality:</b> Google likes links that go to various <u>pages within your site</u> , with <u>varying text</u> used as the clickable part of your link (anchor text or hotspot).
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It is those **specifics** that people ignore. When you syndicate an article, you send the **exact same article** to multiple sources. That means each link goes to the same page on your site, and has the same anchor text.

Not exactly what Google had in mind! It’s only a matter of time before Google starts dismissing links from articles as irrelevant.

<b>Now:</b> Articles provide a good source of content to enhance your site’s existing content.	<b>The Future:</b> “Scraping” (stealing bits of content from sites through an automated software and posting them to your site) is ruining articles. Google had to develop a component in their algorithm that determines how old content is, and who was the first publisher of it. Therefore, articles will be seen as “recycled” and not original content – and of no value to you.
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**Even worse**, if you syndicate an article that you wrote, you are potentially losing the credit for that article -- unless you quickly post it on your site, and wait until it

is indexed so Google knows it belongs to you, and then open it up for syndication. Since article sites are so big and active, they are likely to be spidered first – and then the article site will get credit as the first source to use the content and therefore the owner or creator.

<b>Good:</b> Press Releases are a great way to get news out, throw in some links and you have built in link popularity with media sites, which are typically high PR.	<b>Not Good:</b> People are sending out press releases every time they make a move. Is it really news worthy that you acquired a new client, or that you completed a project? No, not really. Sadly, the real news worthy items get lost in the mass numbers of press releases floating around each and every day.
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With a little bit of restraint and strategy, these strategies could be used to your benefit.

**Here are the solutions – the ways you can still benefit from the various techniques, without contributing to their demise.**

The primary thought behind all techniques should be: *“What is natural?”*

If you are constantly asking yourself,

*“Am I using this in a way that the search engines will view as a natural enhancement to my site and not as an overused and abused method?”*

then you should be fine. So, **Keep it Natural, Don’t (Over) Use and Abuse** should be your new mantra.

Let’s look at specifics.

RSS Feeds:

- **Do:** Use them to enhance existing content.
- **Don’t:** Use them in place of hand written, unique content
  
- **Do:** Limit the number of feeds you use on any given page to 3 or 4.
- **Don’t:** Clutter every page on your site with endless feeds.
  
- **Do:** Target feeds are specific to the keywords you are using on each page.
- **Don’t:** Put feeds that are about other topics that are not relevant on your site.

- **Do:** Turn your hottest, most newsworthy content into feeds to get out there to other people. Blog posts are a natural for feeding content to other people. Blogs are often updated very frequently and are about the hottest topics in your industry.

#### Article Syndication:

- **Do:** Post your article on your own site first, and wait for it to be indexed by the engines before you syndicate it out.
- **Do:** Date each article with the date it was written.
- **Do:** Interlink your articles to other articles on your site that you have written that are relevant to the topic.
- **Do:** Update your SiteMap when you add articles to your site.
- **Do:** Link to your article from your Blog.
- **Don't:** Post the article on your Blog and on your site – that is duplicating content and can be considered spam.
- **Do:** Take the time to create different versions of your article. When syndicating articles out to various article sites, use a handful of different version. Vary the text used as the anchor text in the links, and vary the pages that you link to within your site in the various versions. This will give Google what they are looking for – varying anchor text and links going to many pages on your site, not just one. This is one of the most important, and overlooked steps out there. This alone can **increase the value you get from article syndication**.
- **Don't:** Stuff your article with too many links to your site.
- **Don't:** Link to pages on your site that are not relevant to your article topic.
- **Do:** Create an Article Syndication Plan so that you have a clear plan to consistently release quality articles out to the public. Often people go crazy getting a couple articles out there, but then never do it again. Constant syndication, at a natural rate will get you the most benefit.
- **Do:** Remember to look at the guidelines of each source you submit to – they all have various rules for submitting articles.
- **Do:** Consider the “keyword weight” of your article; aim for a good keyword density, using 1 – 2 keywords per article.
- **Don't:** Stuff the article with keywords, creating something that is not an easy flowing read for your audience.
- **Do:** Look for a unique viewpoint or angle when writing your article. Rehashing the same old topics, sharing the same old opinions won't get you as much mileage out of the article.
- **Do:** Have fun with it. Let your personality shine through in your writing. Articles should not be stiff and stilted. Let your readers connect with you through your writing.
- **Do:** Consider breaking longer articles into a 2 or 3 part series. This will vary how the engines see the content out there, and it creates suspense and anticipation as readers wait to see what the next article in the series will say.

- **Do:** stay on top of the latest talk, news and buzz in your industry and be prepared to quickly pump out a great article to take advantage of some hot buzz or breaking news in your industry.

#### Press Releases:

- **Do:** Consider the topic of the press release, and make sure you can say YES to the following questions: *Is this a topic that people other than me will find interesting? Is this positive press for me and my company, without being too filled with hype and sales pitches?*
- **Do:** Keep the press release witty, to the point, informational and well written. Don't elaborate on too many small points. In a press release, often less is more.
- **Don't:** Send out a press release every day, unless you have something newsworthy to share every day.
- **Do:** Have your press release edited.
- **Don't:** Send out a press release riddled with errors.
- **Do:** Verify all facts and information used in your release.
- **Don't:** Under-use releases. You should plan on 1 or 2 releases each month, as long as you have news to back them up. More is OK only if the news is really important to release out there.
- **Do:** Ask an expert if you aren't sure if your topic is news worthy.
- **Do:** Include a link back to your site, where people can get more information.
- **Do:** Create a section on your site where all your press releases are archived. It is great for credibility.

Note: Always stay current – **if** a technique is abused and no longer beneficial, you'll want to eliminate it from your repertoire quickly so it doesn't hurt you.

If everyone decides not to stand for misuse and abuse of techniques, we'll come a long way towards being where we need to be. So, spread the word – and decide today that your SEO techniques have to work for your future success and **not against** it.

Happy SEOing!

### **The take-away here:**

Be careful – even people with the best intentions can sometimes accidentally run a technique into the ground. With careful thought and planning, using some of your own creative ideas and sticking to the Do's and Don'ts outlined above, you can expect long term success with these techniques.

Whether you handle your SEO yourself, or hire a firm to get your rankings – work with someone that sees the big picture and is willing to work a little bit harder, and wait just a little bit longer for results. They end up the ultimate winner, with

rankings they can hold on to. They don't have to live in fear of the death of the next hottest trend.

For questions about EcomBuffet and how our big-picture SEO services can improve your rankings, contact Jennifer Horowitz at 562-592-5347 or [jennifer@ecombuffet.com](mailto:jennifer@ecombuffet.com). Mention this whitepaper and receive a Free Search Engine Friendliness Evaluation.