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Introduction

Search engines are an excellent way to get relevant visitors to your website. For years, SEO has been one of the best methods to promote a website and increase its traffic. More visits to your site usually equal more conversions and growth.

By doing SEO correctly, businesses don’t have to spend thousands of dollars each month on advertising. Traffic acquisition through SEO is considerably more cost effective than social media promotion, advertising or other channels. Every online business has the potential to be found by more customers through search engine optimisation.

Google takes over 200 ranking factors in consideration before deciding if a website is worth ranking high in the search results. Out of all these factors, one stands out as the most important one...

**Backlinks**

The more quality and relevant backlinks a website has, the higher the chances to rank high in the search results and dominate a niche.

Whether you are already doing SEO, or you are just getting started, this ebook will help you understand everything about BACKLINKS for SEO. We'll talk about using the best practices and how to get long lasting results using techniques that are agreed by Google.

We’ll also show you how to identify if a backlink is good or bad for SEO and how to find thousands of link building opportunities. Last but not least, we’ll explain how you can easily keep track of your backlinks and how
to prevent the most common Google penalties.

If you are serious about improving your organic traffic, we recommend reading this guide front-to-back. Our actionable tips and examples will help you master Backlinks for SEO.
Why backlinks are important and how they can influence your rankings in Google. Know the types of links that matter most for SEO.
If you are a beginner, at first, SEO might be a bit overwhelming. Nonetheless, you have to understand that search engine optimisation is not rocket science, and you can master it if you apply the correct strategies.

A website ranks in search engines for particular keyword terms as a direct result of building or earning backlinks.

**There are two types of links**

1. **Internal links**
   - point to other pages within the same website
   - These links are important for SEO, as the webmaster can create links using his preferred anchor texts. They also help search engines quickly crawl and index pages from a website.
   - A complex internal linking system is critical and can positively impact SEO.

2. **External links**
   - are incoming links placed on third party websites
   - These links have far more authority as a ranking factor than internal links. A website can rank high in search engines with several quality backlinks, but it will be challenging to do so, only with internal links.
   - Depending on how big the competition is, the higher the number of authoritative backlinks a site will need to have to rank on the first page.
Google looks at backlinks as a trust connection between two websites. If a site has lots of backlinks from authoritative sites, it can become an authority as well. To get better at SEO and get more organic traffic, you have to earn quality backlinks.

**Links are also split into two different categories:**

1. **Dofollow backlinks**
   these will influence your rankings in Google in an either positive or negative way.

2. **Nofollow backlinks**
   these links will not have any impact on SEO. However, having nofollow links can be useful for getting more referral traffic and increase your website’s popularity.

Here’s the hyperlink difference between dofollow and nofollow backlinks:

```html
1. <a href="http://www.google.com/">Google</a>
2. <a href="http://www.google.com/" rel="nofollow">Google</a>
```
To easily identify if a backlink is dofollow or nofollow, you can use the **NoFollow Chrome Extension**. This plugin will highlight nofollow backlinks, so you can know how websites link to external sites.

**Chapter 2  
Understanding Backlinks**

A common belief among beginners is that they need to increase the number of their backlinks without considering anything else. That’s not true since Google doesn’t care that much about the quantity, but more about the quality. For example, a site with ten authoritative backlinks will rank higher than a site with 1000 low-quality backlinks.

A site’s backlinks profile has to look as natural as possible, even if all those links were not earned but built. In their quest to achieve higher rankings, many accidentally over optimise their backlinks anchor texts. Google uses a sophisticated algorithm to identify unnatural anchor text distribution and penalises such sites by decreasing their rankings. A site with a correct anchor text distribution should have the majority (between 50-70%) of its backlinks contain different combinations of their brand name and URL.
Not all backlinks are good for SEO. It's not the number of links you have, but more about the quality. Learn how to analyze if a link will help you with SEO or not.
It’s a fact that not all backlinks are equally good or bad for SEO. Also, it’s not just about dofollow or nofollow links.

For long lasting SEO results, you have to know which of your backlinks are good and are influencing your rankings in a positive way. Once identified these links, you can create more of the same.

The most important traits of a good backlink:

1. Relevancy
2. Authority
3. Backlinks from websites with real traffic
4. Backlinks from sites that are performing well in search engines
5. Backlinks from clean neighbourhoods
1 **Relevancy**

A backlink always has to come from relevant websites in your industry. Relevancy is one of the most important qualities a backlink can have. A site that has the majority of its backlinks from relevant sites will rank higher in search engines and will never get a penalty when Google refreshes their algorithms.

One relevant backlink is much stronger than 100 irrelevant backlinks.

An irrelevant backlink is a link to a website, placed on a site or in a context that has nothing to do with the website where it links to. For example, if you have a website that sells countertops, a backlink from a site that covers only sports events will be irrelevant. A useful link, in this case, would be from a home improvement online magazine. For optimal SEO results, make sure all your backlinks are relevant.

2 **Authority**

Backlinks from authoritative websites are valuable for SEO and reputation. The more authority a website linking to you has, the more trusted your site will be by search engines.

Here's a real-life example to explain how authority works. We have Dentist A and Dentist B. Dentist A has many regular patients. Dentist B has well-known patients, like actors and singers. Which of them do you think will be more trusted by the public? Obviously, Dentist B, because of the authority of his customers. He’s gaining more authority, as a result of famous clients recommending him. It’s the same with backlinks for SEO. You want your links to come from the most reputable and trusted sources in your industry.

There are highly authoritative websites that are well known to most people, but there are also lesser-known sites with strong authority. You can safely have links from both. Verify the authority of any website by Googling
it’s brand name. For example, to check how authoritative Monitor Backlinks is, you can type the name of the tool in Google.

Here’s what Google returns:

![Google search results for Monitor Backlinks](image)

Besides the normal results, Google also returns the brand details when searching for “Monitor Backlinks”.

When a result includes multiple pages from the same website, and also photos along with a map, the site is considered highly authoritative by Google.

As long as the website ranks first for its brand name, the website has a good authority. On the opposite, if the website doesn’t rank for its name, the site is not authoritative, and a link from it will not have much SEO value. In most cases, you should avoid having links from sites that don’t rank for their brand name.

### Backlinks from websites with real traffic

Your backlinks should also come from websites with good content and sites that have a proper user engagement. If readers interact with their posts by sharing them on social media or leave comments, the website has a good change to be considered good by search engines.
As long as the website has real traffic and doesn’t have auto-generated content, it’s worth having a link from it, if the other criteria also apply.

**Backlinks from sites that are performing well in search engines**

This is imperative, as it can help you avoid having links from penalised sites. If you get a backlink from a website that’s getting a lot of traffic from search engines, you might benefit of this as well.

You can use **SimilarWeb’s Chrome extension** to check the percentage of traffic each website gets from search engines. The extension is also available for **Safari** and **Mozilla**. Here’s an example:

You can then compare the percentage of traffic a site gets from search with the total number of estimated visits and find out how much traffic a website gets from search engines.
5  

**Backlinks from clean neighbourhoods**

Most of your backlinks must come from sites with high standards, with a good linking policy. A backlink has to be that good, you can take proud of it. Also, make sure that the website from where you have a backlink is not linking to other spammy sites. Don’t associate your site with anything bad or unrelated.

If you see links to pharmacy, adult, viagra or gambling sites, avoid that website.

Last but not least, use common sense to decide if the website gives value to its readers and if your link on it would help readers. These are some questions you can ask yourself to determine if a website is good or bad.

- Would you follow them on social media to be up to date with the new content they are publishing?
- Would you trust the recommendations they wrote in their articles?
- Would you recommend their website to your friends?
- Is the article linking to you providing value to readers?
- Are they updating their website on a regular basis?

If the answers to all the above questions are "YES", then you’ve found an appropriate website. We’ll explore more about determining if it’s worth getting a backlink from a particular website, in the next chapters.
How To Analyse Your Existing Backlinks

Your backlinks are the most important ranking factor for SEO and it's important to keep only the good ones. Learn how to conduct a correct backlinks audit.
It’s vital to analyse your existing website’s backlinks, but also the new ones that you are earning or building. There’s a small margin of being successful with SEO and getting a penalty. You can’t afford to have bad backlinks that might hold your website down in the rankings. We’ve seen hundreds of users wondering why they can’t rank higher in Google, claiming that they were doing the right thing. The truth is they never analysed and disavowed their bad backlinks. That’s what’s keeping many down in the rankings.

SEO is an ongoing process that never ends and requires a lot of attention to your site’s backlinks.

To efficiently manage and analyse your backlinks, use the Monitor Backlinks SEO Tool. If you don’t have an account yet, you can create one here.

Don’t forget to connect your domain with Google Analytics to get more insights about your website’s SEO.
After connected, your dashboard will look similar to the one in the screenshot below.

Monitor Backlinks will automatically detect all your website's backlinks and add them to your account. Even better, the tool automatically checks if your website gets new backlinks every few days, and if it founds new ones, you’ll get emails alerts. The tool is not great just for analysing your backlinks, but also for keeping track of the new ones.

For each of your links, Monitor Backlinks will show you more than 15 different metrics to help you understand if a backlink is good for your website's SEO or not.
In the backlinks table, you can see your links added by the date when they were found or created.

Here’s a little documentation for each metric:

1. **Date**
   
   Monitor Backlinks tries to locate the date when the link was created. If the backlink comes from a blog post, forum post, or something similar, most certainly it will extract the correct date. In case the date is impossible to be retrieved (web directories or pages without a date), it will show the date when the link was first found.

   The date when the link was created can be useful to understand your rate of getting new backlinks.

2. **Link From**
   
   Shows the third party website that’s linking to you.
3 **Anchor text**

Your anchor text distribution is crucial. You shouldn’t use too many commercial anchor texts or otherwise the Google Penguin algorithm might impact your site. When one of your backlinks use a commercial anchor text, you’ll see it highlighted in yellow, as in this screenshot:

![Anchor text screenshot]

4 **Topical Trust Flow**

Below the anchor text, Monitor Backlinks extracts the primary category of the website that’s linking to you. This metric can help you understand if the website is relevant to your site.

5 **Landing page**

Shows where the page where the backlink is pointing. Either it will link to your homepage, subpage or subdomain.

6 **Backlink status**

This is where you’ll see if the link is dofollow or nofollow.

Aside from these two most common statuses, a link can also be: meta nofollow (MNF), backlink not found (BNF), 400 bad request, 404, 403 forbidden, 410 gone, 500 internal server error, 523, 522, 302 moved.
temporarily, 303, 301, server down (SD), robots.txt blocked, 503 service unavailable, domain found.

Out of all the above statuses, only the meta nofollow backlinks will have an impact on your site. The backlinks with codes that start with three are usually redirects. The other ones are temporarily down, or they have been removed. You can try to recover them by outreaching the website owner.

7 **Google index status**

Below the backlinks status, you see the Google index status for the website and page that’s linking to you.

If the icon is green, it means both the domain and page are indexed by Google and will influence your SEO.

If the icon is yellow, the domain is indexed, but the page is not yet indexed. In this case, the backlink will have no effect on your SEO until Google crawls it.

If the icon is red, it means Google did not index the domain and page. Most of the time that’s because a severe Google penalty hit that domain.

Below you can find a screenshot showing all three scenarios.
8 **Spam score**

This metric is provided by Moz. The spam score is given by analysing several spam flags that are verified for each website. If you hold your mouse over, you'll get more details about the reason a site gets a low or high spam score. A high spam score is usually wrong for SEO.

9 **Trust Flow**

A metric provided by Majestic. This is a score based on quality, on a scale between 0-100. Sites closely linked to a trusted seed site can see higher scores, whereas sites that may have questionable links, will have a much lower score.

10 **Citation Flow**

Similar to Trust Flow, a metric provided by Majestic, on a scale between 0-100. It predicts how influential a URL might be based on how many sites link to it.

11 **MozRank**

Metric provided by Moz. The metric is on a scale between 0 to 10. It represents a link popularity score. It shows the importance of any given web page on the internet.

12 **Domain Authority**

Metric by Moz. On a scale between 0 to 100, it predicts how well a website will rank on search engines. Higher Domain Authority equals a site more reputable for search engines.
13 **Page Authority**

Metric by Moz. Similar to Domain Authority, but this one provides insights on a page level, instead of a domain.

14 **TLD**

Top level domain is the highest level of domains in the hierarchical Domain Name System of the Internet. The most commons are .com, .net, .org, .co.uk, .au, .ca, etc. Here, Monitor Backlinks shows the domain extension of the website that’s linking to your site.

15 **Hosting IP**

This metric helps you determine if your backlink is coming from a site that's located in the same country as your website. It's also useful to determine backlinks from blog networks. If you have multiple links from the same hosting IP, you’ll see the number of links in a red background. Below you can see an example of Monitor Backlinks highlighting six backlinks from the same hosting IP.
16 Social signals

For each backlink, the tool extracts the number of social media shares per network. If the page that's linking to your site is appreciated on social media, you'll see it here.

17 External backlinks

The metric shows when the page that's linking to your website has many other external backlinks. Pages with more than 100 external links will be shown in red, as they tend to be of lesser value.

18 Google referring traffic

A backlink can be fine and send traffic, even if it's nofollow. It doesn’t necessarily mean that a backlink is bad, just because it's not influencing SEO. You can see the number of visits each of your backlinks have sent, by checking the last column.

Filtering and sorting your website's backlinks to find the bad ones

Monitor Backlinks has an automated system that detects and signals your website’s dofollow bad backlinks. If any of their metrics indicate that there might be a problem with the quality of the website that’s linking to you, you’ll see an alert sign on the left side of the row. It will look like the one in the screenshot below.
Monitor Backlinks also highlights the backlinks that use commercial anchor texts.

Hold your mouse over the alert icon and you’ll be shown more details about why the link was considered to be bad.

NOTE: If everything indicates the backlink is bad, it’s recommended to manually check the website by opening it in your browser, and review it. Don’t disavow any backlink without analysing if the website is trustworthy or not, by asking yourself the quality questions we’ve mentioned in the previous chapter.

In case you’ve found a site that you want to add to your disavow list, click on the large red button “Disavow domain”. We’ll show you how to export your disavow report, in the coming paragraphs.

To find other bad backlinks, you can filter and sort your links by their metrics. Monitor Backlinks offers the best filtering options of any tool available on the market.
You can access the filters by clicking on the button from the top right side of the backlinks table.

You’ll be given 21 different options to filter your backlinks. You can combine multiple filters at the same time to narrow down the search even more.

We’ll show you several ways to sort your links and find the bad ones.

As you are only interested to see the bad backlinks that are influencing SEO in a negative way, you can choose to see only the links that are dofollow (called “OK” in Monitor Backlinks).
Next, you can choose to see the links from websites that have a domain authority lower than 20. If your site doesn't have many backlinks, filtering might not even be necessary. However, if you have hundreds or thousands of backlinks, this will be very useful.

If your backlinks list is still too long to be manually reviewed, you can add another filter. Choose to see links coming from sites that have a Trust Flow lower than 20.

The list of backlinks you'll have now will be the ones with the bad metrics. You can use these metrics to help you identify your bad links, but don’t rely on them fully. That’s because there are scenarios when a website might be new, and as a consequence have bad metrics. It doesn’t necessarily mean the website is bad, and you shouldn’t have a link from it. That’s why Google and most SEO professionals recommend a manual review for the
links that have doubtful metrics.

**Easiest way to find backlinks from severely penalised sites**

Backlinks from websites penalised by Google will only harm your website. You must avoid being associated with them, at all cost. Therefore, all such sites must be disavowed.

Such websites are often not indexed in Google. Using the filters, click on “Google Index” and then on “Domain not indexed”.

![Google Index](image)

In 98% of the cases, these backlinks must be disavowed immediately. However, it will do no harm if you will give them a manual review before. Some of these might be subdomains that are getting indexed slowly.

**How to group your backlinks**

Monitor Backlinks offers an effortless way of grouping all your backlinks by different categories. For each of your links, you can add multiple tags. All links containing the same tag will be grouped, and you can find them later using the filters.

To tag any backlink, click on small settings icon located on the left side of the row, and then on “Edit”.
On the popup that shows up, you can add any tag you want, and also leave a note for the backlink.
5

How To Disavow Your Bad Backlinks

Get rid of your bad links by telling Google you don't endorse them. Find how to easily disavow all the links that are negatively influencing your rankings.

Try Monitor Backlinks!

Our SEO tool comes with a 30 days free trial and offers the best options to manage your website’s backlinks.
If you are certain about disavowing some backlinks, there are two ways to do it, using the Monitor Backlinks SEO Tool.

1. For the links that Monitor Backlinks shows them to have negative metrics, you can simply hold your mouse over the warning icon and click on "Disavow domain", from the tooltip.

2. If you want to disavow a different backlink that doesn’t have a warning sign, click on the settings icon and then on "Disavow domain".
The backlinks that have been disavowed will be coloured in red, as in the screenshot below.

You can find all of them for further analysis by clicking on "Filters" - “Disavowed”.

**How to export your disavow report**

Monitor Backlinks creates your ready-to-submit disavow report and all you have to do is upload it to Google's disavow tool.

Go to the "Disavow" page on Monitor Backlinks, using the top menu, and then click on the large yellow button "Export".
6
How To Prevent Google Penalties Triggered By Backlinks

Protect your site from penalties and make sure you’ll rank high in the rankings forever.
Bad backlinks cause most of Google's penalties. Four different scenarios might get you bad backlinks:

- A competitor is running a negative SEO attack against your site
- You hired an SEO company or freelancer that's spamming your website
- You are building bad backlinks yourself, because of the lack of knowledge
- You earn bad backlinks

You can prevent all four scenarios by analysing all the new backlinks your website is getting, on a regular basis. When you find some bad ones, try to remove and then disavow them. Always make sure your backlinks profile doesn't have bad links.
After connecting your domain with Google Analytics, the tool will automatically check the status of all the existing backlinks, but also crawls the web for new links. When your site gets new backlinks, you’ll get email alerts. By checking all the new links your site is getting, you can only keep the good ones and disavow the rest.

Major Google algorithm updates will also be noted in your dashboard overview.
Take your link building to a new level by finding great link building opportunities. Build backlinks that will help you grow your organic traffic.
There are plenty of opportunities to build quality backlinks to your website, for all industries. A common misconception is that for some niches, there are not enough opportunities to build links. The truth is that if it’s hard for you to build links, your competitors will have the same struggle. Therefore, you’ll be able to rank higher in Google, with fewer links.

One smart way to find websites that might link to you is by looking at your competitors. Grab a list of your main competitors from Google by searching for your main phrases. Those that rank above you have better backlinks, and their links profile is a gold mine waiting to be exploited.

By replicating the best backlinks of your competitors, you can outrank them in the search results.

Now that you’ve familiarised yourself with Monitor Backlinks, here’s how you can use it to spy on your competitors link building and earning campaigns.
On the top menu, you'll see a button called "Competitors".

You can add up to four competitors per domain. Depending on what plan your account has, you can add as many competitors as you want. After you've added your competitor, click on "view links".

You'll get a table similar to the one you get for your site's backlinks. Using the Moz metrics, you can compare their value and decide which ones are worthy of replicating. Note that not all your competitor's backlinks are good, and you only have to concentrate your efforts on copying the ones that will help you with SEO. Try to understand how your competitor has got a link on that site. Whether it's a guest blog or a blogger's review, you can apply the same strategy to get a link on that site.

Monitor Backlinks highlights in green the domains from where your site already has backlinks.
Thanks for reading our Ebook!

Everything About

**Backlinks for SEO**

ANALYSIS
LINK BUILDING
DISAVOW BAD LINKS

Don’t forget to start your 30 days free trial on MonitorBacklinks.com.

Start Free Trial

You have any questions, feel free to contact us.