

Page Rank Sculpting Debunked

Fri, Jun 19, 2009 | Posted by [Jonathan Stewart](#)

The [SEO](#) industry has been awash with lively discussion since SMX Advanced in Seattle a couple of weeks ago. At the event, Matt Cutts (head of [Google's](#) Webspam team) let slip with a few comments that suggested that [PageRank sculpting no longer worked](#). The exact nature of his comments have subsequently been torn apart by shrewd SEOs, and so early this week, Matt decided to clear up the situation with [this blog post](#).

PageRank sculpting is the practice of manipulating the flow of PageRank throughout a website using the [NoFollow tag](#), so that the most important pages get the most PageRank. The benefits of this technique have long been debated, with some webmasters apparently seeing significant improvements in terms of visibility and traffic following the implementation of PageRank sculpting, while others seeing no change at all.

Matt Cutts yesterday dispelled the myths by clarifying exactly what happens to PageRank that meets a NoFollowed link - rather than being channeled elsewhere within the website, it simply evaporates. To add insult to injury, this "evaporation" has been happening for over a year, leaving many SEOs with egg on their face; plenty still thought this was a valid and useful amendment to website architecture.

Matt Cutts has been issuing veiled references to the fact that NoFollowing probably isn't the best use of a webmaster's time for a while. Here he responds to [Randip Dhesi](#) - one of iCrossing's Natural Search Analysts - who asks "what are your views on PageRank sculpting?".

Matt responds by saying that you're better off ensuring your website has top quality content and great links. Nofollows should be used to keep search engines away from certain types of page - a login page being a good example. He also suggests that PageRank sculpting should be as something you do without the NoFollow tag - i.e. by reviewing your internal linking structure, and making sure you're linking to the correct page from the right place.

Potentially this could really change the SEO landscape - lots of people are talking about what this means in terms of linking to other websites. For example, the Wikipedia NoFollows links to external sources. While this is the correct use of the NoFollow tag in this case, it now means that the Wikipedia is losing significant amounts of PageRank. It's unlikely that the Wikipedia will stop linking out, but some webmasters will be much more precious when it comes to their PageRank.

This has an even bigger impact when you consider blog commenting. Commenters are traditionally allowed to leave a link to their own website when adding value to someone else's blog post. If you're the owner of a blog, it now means you'll be losing PageRank everytime somebody leaves a comment. Precious bloggers may prevent visitors from leaving links, which in turn may reduce the number of people prepared to comment. It's a vicious circle that could erode the virtues of the blogosphere.

For more information on this, it's worth following the [comments over at Matt Cutts's blog](#), and [opinions on this over at SEOMoz](#).

No TweetBacks yet. ([Be the first to Tweet this post](#))

Copyright (C) Connect - Digital Marketing Expertise from iCrossing