

Keyword Dos and Don'ts

Some things hang around forever on the web. There's a lot of [bad SEO advice](#) out there, especially when it comes to using keywords in your site content. Keyword stuffing was one of the hallmarks of old-style and black hat SEO—don't do it unless you want your site to get the mother of all Google slaps.

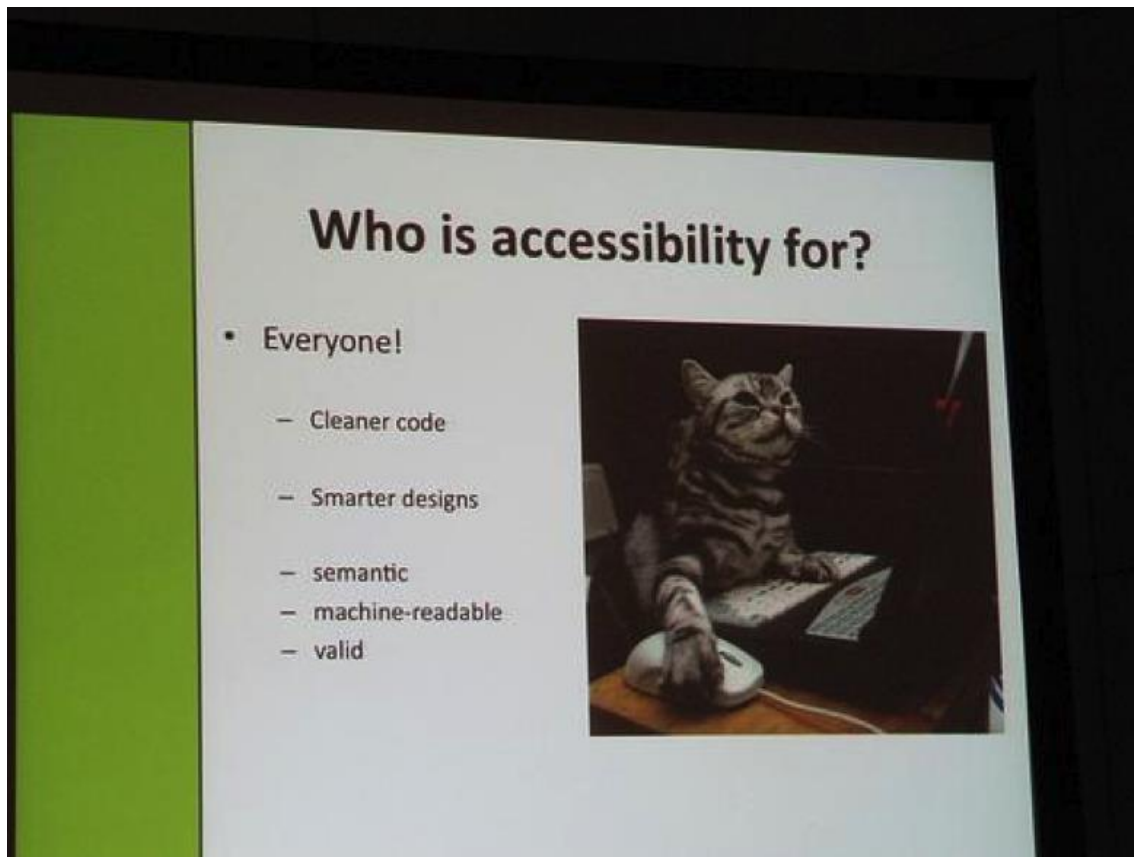
Let's be clear: overusing keywords in titles, meta descriptions and content is a big no-no.

And buying [exact-match keyword domain names](#) could backfire too, unless the rest of your SEO is up to scratch.

Here's a better approach:

- DO pick one [relevant keyword](#) you can optimize your content around and include it in the URL, title, description and text naturally—that last bit is key. You have to be able to read it aloud without wanting to gag.
- DO make content relevant to the keyword and to your overall site and brand. Being relevant is important both to Google and to the readers who find your site.

Accessibility and More



Making your site accessible is one way to put your SEO efforts on steroids. Accessibility is a huge ranking factor; here's what you should do:

- DO ensure that your [navigation](#) works to help people find what they want easily.
- DO name images with your keyword and include the keyword in the ALT tags—you get double benefit from this as it's good for general SEO.

- DO check that your site works well on the most popular browsers and on every platform. Try creating a [mobile responsive site](#) with a tool like [Squarehook](#).
- DO worry about on-page SEO—the right way. [Hubspot](#) has an excellent guide to help with this.

Link Building Techniques to Avoid

You know that old joke about people hiring anyone with a pulse—old style link building was a bit like that. As long as a site was up, SEOs would try to persuade it to link to yours, either directly or via some kind of linking ring.

Forget it.

Here are some old link building techniques that have been consigned to the garbage pile.

- Article spinning to try to fool Google into thinking you are posting lots of unique content – gone!
- Placing articles on low quality directories (or multiple submissions to those same directories) – gone!
- Multiple social bookmarking, fake social media accounts and other [black hat SEO](#) techniques – gone!
- Comment spamming—not that you would do this but you wouldn't believe some of the tactics people will use on your behalf – totally gone!
- Using the same anchor text link on multiple articles or posts or even [press releases](#) – sayonara, baby!

Sorry, but you're going to have to build your links the hard way, with quality, relevant, useful content.

Managing Bad Links

If you have lots of bad links out there as a result of poor SEO tactics, here are a few things you can try:

- DO conduct a [link audit](#) and check out your [link profile](#) to find out if there are undesirable links pointing to your site.
- DO get rid of links from sites that trigger malware warnings in your browser.
- DO use the [Google Disavow Links](#) tool to get Google to ignore any poor quality links that you find.
- DO use [Google Webmaster Tools](#) to see if Google has flagged any issues with your site, then fix them and submit a reconsideration request.
- DO stop comment spammers from linking to you with plugins like [GASP](#).

Link Building – What to Do

If you want to build good links to your site in the age of the Penguin, here are some techniques that can work:

- DO offer yourself as an [expert source](#) for other people's posts, interviews, white papers and more. Use tools like [HARO](#) or [MuckRack](#) to find opportunities and make connections. That's great for building your authority, too.
- DO focus on [local search](#) by setting up your Google+ Local profile and getting listings in local directories. That makes you immediately relevant to the new on-the-go consumer sector.
- DO guest post on high quality sites that are relevant to your business.
- DO build links by leaving useful comments on high quality sites.
- DO encourage other high quality sites to provide honest reviews of your products and services.

Checking on Quality

If you're going to place content on other sites as part of your marketing strategy, then the quality of those sites is just as important as the quality of yours, as it will have a big impact on Google's relevancy and trust algorithms. Here are some tips to help with that.

- DON'T place guest posts on low quality sites that look like spammy article directories. If that's how it looks, you don't want to be there.
- DO use tools to help you find the quality of a site, like a free online Page Rank checker, the [SEO Tools](#) Chrome plugin or the [SEOMoz toolbar](#) for Firefox. Both of those plugins will give you important information about a site's age, ranking, social presence and more.
- DO check sites and make sure they have thematic coherence—a little bit of this and a little bit of that is a sign of poor quality and a red flag for the search engine powers that be.
- DO check for great content before placing your own content on a site. [Social sharing](#) (by more than one or two people) and comments are another sign that a site is trustworthy.

Content Marketing

Whether you're writing content for your own site or placing it somewhere else, you need to focus on quality for maximum SEO impact and appeal to your readers.



- DO set up your Google+ profile and claim [authorship](#) of all your content. Nothing says trust like that little photo in the search engine listing for the content you have written.
- DO craft compelling titles and descriptions for posts, pages and other content so that your search engine entries are appealing.
- DO create [in-depth content](#) that is interesting, informative and engaging. Not only will this enhance the image of your brand but it will be more shareable by quality sites and social media accounts.
- DO include images with all content to enhance readability and general appeal.
- DO enhance your content marketing efforts with quality products such as webinars and other content products.

Getting Social



If people are sharing your content and talking about you, that's a big plus as far as Google is concerned, but only if it happens naturally. Here are some steps you can take to make that happen.

- DO create a strong, branded social media presence where you share relevant content but DON'T just push your own stuff. [Underwater Audio](#) does a great job of this and has an excellent, [engaged Facebook](#) following as a result.
- DO add social sharing links to your content and include a [call to action](#) encouraging readers to share.
- DO encourage customers and consumers to review your products and services—they will be sure to share.

The Bottom Line

Create great content for real people and DON'T try to trick them. OK?

Source: The Daily Egg, October 2, 2013

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