

# Social Bookmarking **Exposed**

Everything You Need To Know About  
Social Bookmarking, Tagging and  
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)



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## Social Bookmarking and Tagging

How many times have you found a great website and wanted to share its immense value with others? Welcome to Social Bookmarking and Tagging, the powerful practice of adding URLs into a social content website and 'tagging' them with familiar keywords.

Creating a collection of Social Bookmarks is easy. Simply register with a site such as <http://www.delicious.com>, [www.stumbleupon.com](http://www.stumbleupon.com) and [www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com) where you can store Social Bookmarks and add Tagging - simple descriptions to make finding these sites easier for everyone. Visitors to these websites can quickly find your Social Bookmarks by searching for websites by such criteria as keywords, phrases, contributing user or frequency of nomination.

Social content websites like [delicious.com](http://delicious.com) and [digg.com](http://digg.com) allow people to share their favorite websites with others and in some cases (like digg) enable the addition of comments. It's becoming common for websites to include icons or links to the most popular social tagging sites to encourage visitors to tag them, with a view to generating more site traffic.

Social tagging forms a vital element of social media optimization (SMO), a way to enhance the placement of [websites](#) on [social media](#) sites. Simple SMO techniques include the addition of [RSS feeds](#), a "Share/Tag This Page" device for users to improve your standing with a quick click, and incorporating third-party features such as [Flickr](#) photos and [YouTube](#) videos.

Crucially, social tagging also forms an important part of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) since it builds 'link popularity' for your pages. In the following pages we'll discuss link popularity and how it can improve your website rankings in natural search engine results.

# Link Popularity

## What is link popularity?

Search engine rankings are critical to the success of a website. And link popularity is a key determinant in how your website is perceived and rated by the search engine.

Link popularity is determined by the number of links to your pages from other respected and credible websites. Inbound links are vital if your pages are to rank respectably in search results, especially for competitive search terms (those keywords and phrases often requested by users of search engines). Do:

- Ensure your site is listed in at least one of the major directories (including <http://www.google.com>, <http://www.yahoo.com>, <http://www.bestoftheweb.com> and <http://www.dmoz.com>).
- Generate inbound links to your site from respected and authoritative sites. One of the best ways to accomplish this is by leaving well-considered comments on popular blogs and news sites. Once published these comments are often complemented by a link to your website.
- Request inbound links from websites sharing your own interests and goals.
- If possible, control the format of the inbound links' URL. Make sure it is always the same and is used consistently.
- Use targeted keywords for the destination page in the inbound link's anchor text and title attribute.
- Whenever possible ensure inbound links lead to deeper content pages, not just a gateway or top-level page.
- Ensure inbound links do not include the "nofollow" attribute. This is because, put simply, Google search robots do not credit any links with a rel="nofollow" tag attached to them.
- Use social media websites to increase the visibility of your content, which will increase the chances of other developers linking to it.

## What affects link popularity?

Many factors affect link popularity, including the:

- Number of inbound links
- Quality of the link source
- Type of link
- Link URL consistency
- Link text, attributes, and content close by
- Link destination

## The number of inbound links

Search engines consider the total number of links pointing at your web page and domain name as a whole. The final tally includes links from external sites with different domain names and links from other pages on your own site.

For an approximate count of inbound links by going to each search engine and searching for your URL prefaced by "link:". For example, if you search for "link:www.hubdex.com" on Google it will return all the web

pages Google has indexed that contain a link to a page at [www.hubdex.com](http://www.hubdex.com).

To compare the number of inbound links seen by several different search engines at once, use the link popularity tool at <http://www.marketleap.com>. Results should only be used as a guide because search engines don't always provide an accurate representation of inbound links, and statistics fluctuate daily.

## Quality of the link source

Search engines consider the credibility and reputation of the site hosting the inbound link. The more authoritative the source site, the more valuable the link.

For example, a link from CNN.com is worth more to your website's search engine standing than a whole host of links from small blog sites. Bear in mind some blog sites are considered authoritative, however, so you need to be aware of the source from which you request links.

## Type of link

To maximize the benefit of inbound links, try to ensure they can be indexed effectively by search engines. Inbound links should

- Be text only - not images
- Not contain the 'nofollow' attribute in the link's code

For more about accessible links please read the crawlability section later in this eBook.

## Link URL consistency

When search engines total the number of inbound links to a page they frequently assume different URLs point at different pages - even when this is not the case. It's important to make sure inbound links all 'look' the same, using the same formatting, filename, and variables (if any).

For example, search engines may think these three URLs lead to three different pages, just because they are formatted differently:

```
http://www.your-site.com
http://www.your-site.com/
http://www.your-site.com/index.html
```

The same rule applies to vanity URLs, jumpIDs or dynamically generated links including tracking or session IDs. For example, the following links all lead to the same page but search engines will not credit them accordingly because theirs do not match:

```
http://www.your-site.com/hho/cache/252121-0-0-225-121.html?jumpid=re_R602_mktg/ipg/ep
```

```
http://www.your-site.com/go/digitalphotography
```

```
http://www.your-site.com/united-states/consumer/digital_photography/home_f.html
```

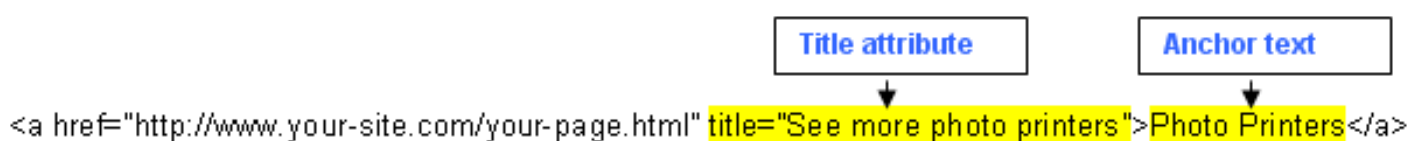
Using different URLs dilutes SEO efforts by making it appear each page has fewer inbound links. This reduces the potency of your page ranking for its targeted keywords.

## Link text, attributes, and nearby content

Search engines also look at nearby content, anchor text and the "title" attribute text of inbound text links, taking this into consideration when indexing the link's destination page. For example, if a search engine captures a large number of links including the text 'photo printers', all pointing at the same page, it is more likely to credit that page as highly relevant for people searching for photo printers.

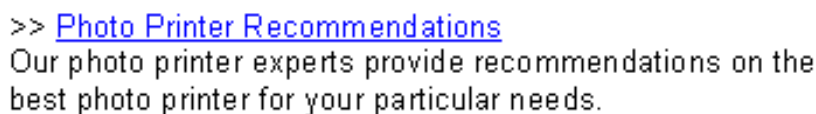
When linking internally to another web page, include the keywords appropriate for that page in the link's anchor text and title property.

Here's an example of a link title attribute and anchor text:



The diagram illustrates the components of an HTML link. It shows the code: `<a href="http://www.your-site.com/your-page.html" title="See more photo printers">Photo Printers</a>`. Above the code, two boxes labeled "Title attribute" and "Anchor text" have arrows pointing to the corresponding parts of the code. The text "See more photo printers" is highlighted in yellow, and "Photo Printers" is also highlighted in yellow.

To help search engines index pages correctly it helps if a link has complementary content close by. This helps explain what the linked-to page is about. Here's an example of great linking:



The example shows a link with the text: `>> Photo Printer Recommendations` followed by the text: "Our photo printer experts provide recommendations on the best photo printer for your particular needs."

## Link destination

Link popularity is measured at page level, so it's important to get links to all pages on the site rather than just the home page. Cross-linking between site pages can also help boost the overall link popularity of the site.

When requesting inbound links ensure some point to content pages deeper in the site hierarchy, not just to gateways or top-level pages.

## Social content sites and link popularity

Social content websites are user-driven, aggregating links and other forms of web content such as images and movie files that are contributed, and often voted upon, by users.

Social content sites enhance the visibility of your site content and rapidly propagate it to a much wider audience, encouraging valuable inbound links and potentially increasing overall traffic - the cornerstone of effective SEO.

# SEO-friendly social content sites

There are fundamentally two types of social content sites particularly valuable to your SEO efforts: social bookmarking sites, and social news sites.

## Social bookmarking sites

bookmarking is the practice of saving Bookmarks - or Favorites - to a user-driven website and 'tagging' them with keywords. Other users are invited to review these bookmarks and get involved at a more meaningful level, by tagging them in their own social bookmarking profiles or linking to them from their own websites. Most social bookmarking sites tend to work the same way: the contributing user tags a URL and other users decide if they want to tag and link to the website from their own.

## Social news sites

Social news sites differ to social bookmarking sites in that they do not rely purely on user contribution. While some allow users to post and tag any URLs to the site, others such as Slashdot, Mashable and Engadget are led by an editorial team that decides if a URL is worth sharing. Social news sites do provide many of the same benefits as social bookmarking sites, in generating of high-quality inbound links, and increased visibility of linked-to websites.

# Guidelines for using social content sites for SEO

Here are seven ways to get noticed by users of social content sites - and maximize your SEO:

1. Create fresh and appealing content.
2. Optimize the content for search to help taggers to find your content.
3. Cross-link between your content and other related material to keep visitors on your website and hopefully lead to them bookmarking other content.
4. Include links to other pages on your website. When content is shared via a social site, RSS feed, or other distribution method, these inbound links will help to improve your link popularity.
5. Be sure links included in your content are direct links, not 'vanity' URLs or any that are redirected and cause confusion to search engines.
6. Provide links to the social content sites you wish to target. In this way your visitors can quickly and easily 'vote' for your material to be included on that social content site.
7. List or vote for your own content on social content sites sparingly, since overuse of this approach is seen by other users as 'spamming' and is likely to backfire.

# Ensuring Crawlability

## What is 'crawlability'?

Crawlability denotes the accessibility of your site to search engine robots. To index and rank your site pages search engine robots must first be able to find them and they do this by following, or 'crawling', a path of made up of links.

Any pages with no links leading to it are not likely to be found. It is therefore important to first consider the navigation on your website, to make sure all content you wish to be indexed is linked. A site map is essential if you have more than two levels of content in your site hierarchy.

## Crawlability guidelines

### Help search engines find your page:

- When launching a new page request links from other pages and websites - if your content is relevant.
- Ensure links leading to your page are accessible to search engines (see below)

### Give search engines clues about your page content:

- Use link anchor text relevant to the new page (preferably using the targeted key phrase for the page). "Our 2009 range", for example, rather than "for more information", or "click here".
- When you cannot use keywords in a link's anchor text, insert keywords into the anchor tag's "title" attribute.

### Make sure links throughout your site are accessible:

- Use plain text HTML links
- Provide alternative access to inaccessible links, such as those in JavaScript (drop-downs and fly-out menus), layers, Flash, or other non-static navigation.
- Excepting special circumstances, do not use the "nofollow" attribute in the link tag. nofollow prevents search engine robots from following the link.

## How the linking method affects crawlability

Links can be provided using a number of different methods, not all of which are crawlable by search engines. If an inaccessible linking method is used, search engines may not be able to find or index all of a site's important pages.

Only simple `<a href="..."></a>` text links are reliably crawled by search engine robots.

Image links and image maps are sometimes ignored by search engine robots as 'spam' due to them being used historically to 'cram in' keywords and links. Neither do these elements provide keyword guidance. Links contained in Flash (by and large) or generated by code such as JavaScript cannot be indexed by search engines at all.

# URLs and SEO

## How can URLs affect a site's SEO?

The following URLs have SEO implications:

- Secure URLs
- URLs with dynamic parameters
- 'Vanity' or 'marketing' URLs
- Other redirected URLs

### Secure URLs

Most major search engines will not index secure pages (starting with https://) so content on such pages will not appear in their results. Make sure material suitable for everyone can be found at a http:// URL.

### Guidelines regarding secure URLs


- Avoid using https:// for content you wish to appear on search engine results. It is particularly important that the home page of your website starts with http:// otherwise subsequent pages will not be indexed. If secure pages with important content cannot be made non-secure, at least apply basic SEO practices to them.

### URLs with dynamic parameters

Any URL containing a jumpID, sessionID, or query string has dynamic parameters, and can reduce a page's SEO effectiveness. You must bear this in mind when creating campaign pages which marketers often suffix with such additional parameters for the purposes of tracking results.

Many search engines will not index URLs including dynamic, or will simply use the root page minus the additional parameters.

*This example shows a URL with dynamic parameters (here, a query string):*

Query string 

[http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=19&pq-locale=en\\_US&\\_requestid=11979](http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=19&pq-locale=en_US&_requestid=11979)

### Guidelines for URLs with dynamic parameters

- For the purposes of SEO focus on a page with the parameters stripped out
- If dynamic parameters must be used, and you know how to make them appear static (without using the

"?" and "=" signs), then do so. Exact implementation will depend on your hosting and technology environment. If you have questions about how to do this or whether this is possible in your site's environment, please contact your IT support team.

- If dynamic parameters must be used, and cannot be made to appear static, then restrict the number and length of these parameters.

## **'Vanity' or 'marketing' URLs**

Vanity URLs (also known as "go stations" or "marketing URLs") reduce a page's link popularity and rankings because inbound links leading to the page pass through a redirect (see redirects section) instead of pointing directly at the page.

Search engines may index both the marketing URL and the 'actual' URL, deciding they are two separate pages with duplicate content. At minimum, this will dilute the page's link popularity and cause the search engines to lower the page's rankings.

### **How to test for a 'vanity' URL**

To test whether a URL is a vanity URL (or simply redirected) type it into a web browser address or location bar, hit Return or click "Go", and watch to see if it resolves to a different address. If it does, it's a vanity URL. For SEO purposes it's best to use that final, direct URL for any linking to the page.

### **Guidelines regarding 'vanity' URLs**

Whenever possible, use direct URLs in the link code rather than vanity URLs. Direct links help increase the target page's link popularity and rankings. Vanity URLs split link popularity among more than one web page in a search engine's index (the vanity URL and the actual destination URL).

### **Other redirected URLs**

When a page is removed from a site or moved to a different location its original URL is often redirected to point at the new page. For more detailed information about the SEO implications of this, please see the redirects section.

# Redirects

## How redirects affect SEO

A redirect tells search engine robots the location of relocated content. For SEO purposes there are two major types of redirect: the permanent '301' redirect, and the temporary '302' redirect. It's important to use the right redirect to retain the link popularity and search engine rankings of a moved page or section.

## Important guidelines

Use 301 redirects for page or directory moves whenever possible.

301 redirects are the only type search engine robots treat consistently by following them to the new page, transferring link popularity for all links pointing to the previous page and indexing the linked-to page going forward (rather than continuing to index the previous page or none at all).

## Types of redirects

### Permanent 301 redirects

A 301 redirect tells search engine robots a page has permanently moved to a new location. Using a permanent redirect can transfer the old page's link popularity and Google PageRank to the new page, preventing a fall in rankings. This is especially important when moving established pages that receive many inbound links.

### Temporary 302 redirects

A 302 redirect tells search engine robots of the temporary relocation of a page. Temporary redirects give the target page an uncertain status with search engines - the target page will not benefit from the old page's link popularity or Google PageRank, for example, and it may not be indexed at all because of its temporary status.

### Client-side redirects

There are a number of methods that can be used to implement a redirect. The following methods are termed 'client-side' because the redirection is handled by the visitor's browser. **Note that none of these methods are search engine friendly.**

#### 1) META Refresh tag redirects

Pages are sometimes redirected by adding a META refresh tag to the <HEAD> element. For example:

```
<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="0;URL='http://www.example.com/' />
```

Search engine robots will not crawl the URL in this tag to the new page, so this method is not search engine friendly.

## 2) JavaScript redirects

JavaScript (and other scripting languages) can also be used to redirect a visitor to a different page. An example:

```
<script type="text/javascript"> <!-- window.location = "http://www.google.com/" //--> </script>
```

Search engine robots do not execute JavaScript code, so they will not crawl this URL the new page. This redirect method is not suitable for search engine indexing.

## Redirection Questions

### How do I tell if a page URL is being redirected?

Simply type the URL into a web browser address bar, hit Return or click "Go". If the URL changes in front of your eyes, then it is being redirected.

### How do I tell what kind of redirect is being used?

Free tools allowing you to check the header of a page to see if a 301 redirect is being used include <http://www.seoconsultants.com/tools/headers.asp>. While this may not detect all types of redirects discussed above, it can be helpful.

To use the tool simply enter the URL and select "Check Server Headers".

If you see this in the result text:

Status Code: HTTP/1.1 302 Object moved

then that URL has a 302 redirect.

## The Twitter phenomenon

In 2006 the internet changed forever, as a new website answered the prayers of many developers jaded by the constant changing playing field of SEO and looking for new ways to promote their content.

Responding to an ever-increasing demand from users to share information quickly and concisely, the micro-blogging concept was born. The first site to harness its revolutionary potential was Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>). In less than three years the growth of Twitter has been nothing short of stratospheric, giving search engines a real run for their money as users mine its near-limitless encyclopedia of user-created knowledge.

In 2007 Twitter had users in the thousands. Today they are in the millions and Twitter's user base continues to grow by hundreds of thousands each and every month. Compare that to MySpace, formerly the darling of social media, and even Facebook - still a burgeoning presence - and it becomes obvious why you can't afford to miss out on the site some are calling 'the new internet'.

Twitter was launched without a strong search capability. In the beginning it was difficult to locate users' posts, a huge opportunity missed by the developers. But as Twitter has grown up, the proprietary search and a raft of powerful third-party tools have been developed and refined to give strength to the argument that Twitter really could become a Google beater when it comes to finding information on the web.

Why? Real-time information, on demand. Google has to index pages from websites, and this takes time. The moment users post content to Twitter, it is available to search. And the user base is of such magnitude that there are few subjects yet to have been discussed at length on this revolutionary website.

Your author has been 'tweeting' on Twitter (for the website has a language all of its own) at <http://www.twitter.com/JohnMerrick> for a long time and it is the easiest thing in the world to sign up for an account.

### **Why you need to use Twitter - now**

Twitter has a membership base of people keen to hear your message, with whom you can network, and to whom you can market your products. To take advantage of this free marketing tool you simply join up and start 'following' other members. As a result you will begin to receive 'followers', the number of which will continue to rise as you continue to follow people yourself.

It's absolutely vital that you share meaningful information with your followers. Since there is already quite a lot of 'noise' in the Twittersphere you can stand head and shoulders above many other members by posting content relevant to your niche. Think of Twitter as your window on the world, and your followers as your friends. What do you want to tell them? How can you best sell your product wisely and interestingly?

Once you have established yourself on Twitter you can share all manner of content and links to websites among a huge audience. What's more, once you are recognized as an information expert, it is likely that people will 'retweet' your Twitter posts to their own networks, thus spreading your news among a potentially limitless group of users.

It's easy to see, therefore, why you're missing out if you're not on Twitter.

# How to begin on Twitter

Here's a quick guide to getting started on Twitter - and developing your own strong presence:

- Go to <http://www.twitter.com> and create an account.
- Use the Advanced Search feature at <http://search.twitter.com> and define the type of people you're looking to network with.
- Trigger a daily report based on subjects discussed by Tweeps (other users of Twitter) at <http://tweetscan.com/alerts.php>
- Use a directory of Tweeps such as <http://www.twellow.com/> and search for followers by occupation and subject preferences
- Add yourself to a directory of Tweeps such as <http://wefollow.com/>. During registration you will be asked to categorise yourself based on your preferences. Be as specific as possible here since the great user base means that the 'long tail' concept works best here if you want to stand out from the crowd.
- To instantly generate a list of followers use the free service at <http://mrtweet.net>. This can be hit and miss but it's a great way to add a wide range of followers from the get-go, and you will find some great people to network with this way.
- [The Twitter Traffic Machine](#) is a great resource detailing how to setup an automated system that will help you grow your Twitter followers. Even if you don't implement the whole system there is some great golden nuggets of information that will certainly help improve your Twitter usage.
- [Twitter Profit Guide](#) contains detailed methods on how you can make a profit from using Twitter. Learn stealth techniques to get people and your followers to see you as a trusted friend and hand you money no matter what niche you are in.

For more detailed information on setting up and using Twitter check out the **12 secret tips for twitter success exposed** report that is available in the [Social Bookmarking Exposed members area](#)



## Recommended Resources endorsed by Social Bookmarking Exposed

Firstly don't forget to follow me on Twitter <http://twitter.com/JohnMerrick>

[Twitter](#) is THE micro blogging platform allowing you to send short messages (up to 140 characters) or "Tweets" to members and your followers.

[Tweet My Blog](#) Easily Combine The Power Of Twitter & Wordpress To Create A Viral Traffic Monster!

[Twitter Traffic Machine](#) is a great resource detailing how to setup an automated system that will help you grow your Twitter followers.

[Twitter Profit Guide](#) contains detailed methods on how you can make a profit from using Twitter. Learn stealth techniques to get people and your followers to see you as a trusted friend and hand you money.

[Twitter-effect-2](#) Learn The Insider Secrets To Using Twitter To Gain New Friends, Get More Traffic, And Make More Sales? See how to use Twitter to grow your online business presence!

[Floating Action Button](#) A unique script that allows you to grab attention on all your web sites and splash pages. use this tool to attract attention and generate sign ups, sales and so much more!

[Instant Banner Creator](#) is point and click three step wizard, where you can easily create high performing banners, buttons, headers, footers and peel ads.

[Daily Niche Idea](#) the ultimate free to join program for your follow up series.

[MembershipGoldRush](#) is a 12 module training program built to equip people with a solid business model to create membership sites, bringing in long term, compounding, automated income.

[Affiliate Funnel](#) is the ultimate traffic exchange and safelist downline builder.

[Advertising Know How](#) is an awesome program with a co-registration service, article directory, and a traffic exchange all in one.

[Clickbank](#) the biggest and most successful, digital product affiliate network on the net.

[Dragon Surf](#) is one of the fastest growing, most responsive and effective traffic exchanges online.

[Forum Traffic Gold](#) Unlock the 10 Keys to Limitless Forum Driven Traffic.

[HitsConnect](#) We highly recommend this excellent ad tracker and rotator, it's well worth the small investment required. IMSF Members get a 30% discount.

[I Love Hits](#) is one of the oldest traffic exchanges online, and remains a strong leader in the industry. The 'no-frills' traffic exchange with great delivery.

[Instant Squeeze Page Generator](#) takes the hard work out of designing a professional squeeze page and makes it so easy a baby could do it. If you can point and click you can create a squeeze page in minutes.

[Traffic Bunnies](#) is growing very quickly. Fantastic admin, great promotions... and amazing traffic exchange.

[Traffic-Splash](#) The original surf rewards exchange where you get more credit for your click. Go surf with the dolphins and watch your results multiply.