# BIGGER LAW FIRM A magazine for attorneys

#### SEO IN-DEPTH

Technical SEO audits: Make sure your website is user-friendly & search-engine-friendly

#### VIRTUAL IMPRESSION

When every millisecond matters, vector based graphics are the way to go.

MASTERING THE ART OF

STORYTELLING





Building a successful brand story involves creating an emotional connection with potential clients. Your brand story is a narrative that provides a glimpse of who you are as a law firm and fosters its subsequent growth.



#### **MESSAGING**

Engage your visitors with an interactive content experience

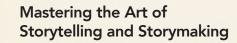




# FEATURES



ul/Aug 2015



Human-to-human connections are not only central to marketing but also to law firms. In essence, your firm works to solve people's problems while providing a positive client experience. Brand storytelling can be used as a powerful tool that helps build relationships and gives your brand a voice.





#### SEO IN-DEPTH

#### **SEO Audits Demystified**

A well-designed and content-rich website is necessary to move up in Google's rankings, but that alone is usually not sufficient. Attention must be paid to search engine optimization, making sure your website is not only user-friendly but search-engine-friendly as well.



#### **VIRTUAL IMPRESSION**

#### Rethinking Graphics on the Internet

Optimizing web pages is a never-ending task, and when every millisecond matters, vector based graphics are the way to go.

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Bigger Law Firm™ was founded to introduce lawyers to new marketing and firm management ideas. Advancing technology is helping law firms cover more territory, expand with less overhead and advertise with smaller budgets. So many tools exist, but if attorneys are not aware of these resources, they cannot integrate them into their practice. The Bigger Law Firm magazine is written by experienced legal marketing professionals who work with lawyers every day. This publication is just one more way SEO | Law Firm™ is helping attorneys Build a Bigger Law Firm™.

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# SEO OBITER DICTA

#### Short Content Could Rank Higher

The term "thin content" became an SEO industry buzzword two years ago when Google's Panda update started pounding websites that contained content with no real user value. Thin content is often associated with short page length or low word count. But Google's terms simply define it as content that provides "little to no added value."

The examples provided by Google include:

Automatically generated content: This is content that is built by bots. Usually, this type of content is created by uploading someone else's content into a synonym-based content generator. The result is usually nonsensical, but unique as far as plagiarism is concerned. For the sake of your user's experience, this should never happen on your law firm's website. Just nine years ago, this lazy content was taking over search results and cluttering Google's index with low-value pages. Google Panda has come very close to eliminating this problem.

Thin affiliate pages: Fortunately, this type of content is not common on attorneys' websites. Affiliate pages generally offer low-quality content with the sole intention of getting someone to click on a link to purchase a product.

Content from other sources: Content from other sources is a problem that haunts law firms regularly. You may have thought it was a great idea to copy city ordinances, state or federal laws and other content relevant to your practice areas to your site. This is duplicate content — whether you have a legal right to use it or not — and it will damage your Google rankings. If you have such content, read our bonus tip.

**Doorway pages:** These pages exists solely to attract search engines, and they provide "little to no added value" for your website's visitors.

Not one of these examples from Google mentions word count. The intent of the Panda update was not to encourage content bloat and ask writers to bombard the internet with more text; it was to encourage better content.

Length does not necessarily create better rankings. For example, consider the strong positions of many frequently asked questions in search results.

For the long-tailed keyphrase, "How long will a commercial vehicle accident lawsuit take?" the first-ranked listing is from the website of The Lietz Law Firm.

### DO YOU HAVE DUPLICATE CONTENT THAT IS USEFUL TO VISITORS?

If you have laws, court opinions or government resources on your site, you are hosting duplicate content. But it is useful content, so deleting it may not be the best solution. Simply add the follow meta tag to that page, or select "noindex" using your website's SEO plugin.

#### <META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX">

This will tell Google to ignore your duplicate content (thus preventing backlash), while leaving the content available to your human visitors.

#### **BONUS TIP**



The Lietz Law Firm FAQ has 280 words. The second-ranked website is an article on HG.org that consists of 798 words.

On the surface, it seems like a large, established resource like HG.org should get the higher position. It is a bigger site and has a longer article. But Google does not just measure the length of the page or even time spent on a site.

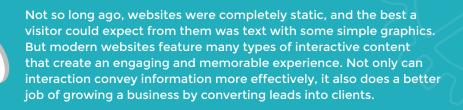
Last Fall, Stephen Kenwright from London-based digital agency, Branded3, published an article on Search Engine Watch titled, "3 Basic Principles of Journalism to Consider When Writing Content for Google." In that article he explains the "time to long click" metric used by Google as "Literally — how long a user spends with a website after leaving Google's search engine results page." But that timing is not the full picture, or even the priority. Kenwright explains, "What the search engine is most interested in is what the user does next: does she go back to Google and click on another result? ... Or does that user perform a new search entirely — something unrelated to the original query?"

By this definition, Google has watched people search for keyphrases like, "How long will a commercial vehicle accident lawsuit take?" Perhaps users lost patience with the more in-depth HG.org article, whereas the more concise Lietz Law Firm FAQ answered their question and did not result in a need for a new search. By Google seeing a user click on the Lietz Law Firm FAQ page and not click on other results in Google or start another related search, Google has determined their content to be most useful.

This is in direct contrast to conventional wisdom that says a longer time onsite and a lower bounce rate equals better rankings. Focus on value, not length. If your content can get people the answer they want in a short amount of time, it may be seen as more useful than a long in-depth study.

- Jason Bland

# GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS WITH INTERACTIVE CONTENT



Interactive content is expected for some companies' websites, such as those of video game makers and other high-tech businesses, but it is still relatively uncommon on law firms' sites. Is that because law firms do not benefit from such content, or because they simply have not yet caught on to the trend?

Your site may already have some limited interaction features. For instance, visitors may be invited to fill out a simple contact form in order to receive a call back. Or readers of your blog may have the opportunity to comment on a post. Features such as these are useful but basic. A variety of more advanced interactive content is available and appropriate for the law firm that wants its website to stand out.

Quizzes can serve as a tool to educate the reader. A bankruptcy attorney's site could feature a quiz about bankruptcy law. It could be a true-or-false quiz with questions about the criteria for bankruptcy eligibility or dischargeable versus non-dischargeable types of debt. Or it could be a matching quiz in which the user tries to match each chapter of the bankruptcy code with its description.



An assessment is an interactive feature useful for business development. A bankruptcy attorney might have an assessment test for clients to get an idea of whether Chapter 7 liquidation or Chapter 13 reorganization is best for them. For other types of law, an assessment might help a prospective client to understand whether they have a case or whether they need to hire an attorney. In all cases, users can be gently guided toward providing contact information or, failing that, contacting the firm themselves. Disclaimers are necessary to clarify that assessment results do not constitute legal advice.

Polls and surveys are a valuable way to get to know the visitors to your site. Perhaps you have a blog that allows readers to comment on posts. Unless the topics or the writing itself is very provocative, you probably get very few comments. This does not mean that you are not getting readers and it does not mean the readers are not enjoying the content. Readers simply tend not to comment in large numbers. But a quick poll or survey is likely to generate a much higher response rate. Participants understand that their time commitment is negligible, and they do not have to worry about expressing themselves articulately. An estate attorney might survey readers on their concerns about retirement; an intellectual property attorney might ask readers whether they favor recent changes in patent law. People want not only to register their opinion, but to know how it compares to other opinions, and a brief poll is a compelling way to allow them to do both. It also allows you to know more about visitors to your site.

Even text can be upgraded to interactive content that engages the reader and helps keep information in context. For instance, consider

a series of examples, illustrating a legal concept, that were originally presented as three paragraphs of text. These examples could be transformed into a series of slides which the user steps through with a click. This way, the subsequent examples are available to those who need them and hidden from those who do not. Moreover, the explanatory text that comes before the illustrating examples will stay on-screen even as the reader advances websites across industries. This is because until recently, creating such content took many hours of work by highly skilled computer programmers. But thanks to a growing number of easy-to-use content creation tools, the same tasks can be accomplished in short order by people with little or no programming knowledge.

When searching for such tools and platforms, you may come across slick,

Readers simply tend not to comment in large numbers. But a quick poll or survey is likely to generate a much higher response rate. Participants understand that their time commitment is negligible, and they don't have to worry about expressing themselves articulately.

through the examples, easing the transition back and forth between explanation and example.

Another way in which text can be made interactive is the use of pop-ups. Every attorney knows that a glossary is sometimes necessary when explaining technicalities. But flipping back and forth between text and a glossary is not fast enough to be conducive to learning, especially when the text is electronic. An in-line glossary is far more convenient. A term that needs defining in your text content might be underlined in blue like a web link. Clicking on it could trigger a pop-up, in which the definition appears right next to the term. Similarly, pop-ups can be used to contain parenthetical text, such as technical or historical information, thus keeping it close at hand but out of the way.

Interactive content is a great way to educate the user and leave a lasting impression. But only recently has it grown quickly in popularity on

all-in-one platforms that allow you to create a wide variety of content types. These are primarily useful for medium to large businesses that want to make a large commitment to interactive content marketing, as they often require a year-long contract and cost thousands of dollars. If you want to get your feet wet with interactive content, your best bet is to decide on a particular type of content you think will work with your practice and clientele and search for tools to make exactly that. These single-purpose tools will tend to be cheap or free for limited use.

As the technology matures, the content that end users can create will continue to improve in quality while requiring less effort. Now is the time to start looking for opportunities to add modest interactivity to your site with a small investment of time and money. Your visitors will recognize that your firm is ahead of the curve and your site will leave a great impression.

- Ryan Conley





The more relatable the narrative you tell, the more loyalty it will spark. Some elements that contribute to developing a compelling brand story are detailed below.

#### Authenticity

An authentic brand story is true to your firm's values and mission statement, aligning strongly with the services you offer to clients while remaining genuine and heartfelt. Ask yourself what your firm stands for and why. Focus your story on the same ideas your firm focuses on. Can you actually deliver on your promises?

In their search for legal counsel, potential clients are likely to research prospective firms online before making a decision to do business with them. Stories that are obviously disassociated from the brand will almost always fail with audiences. People will be able to see through hyperbolic claims, so make sure your words match your actions.

#### Being memorable

Many companies focus their brand stories on what they do or how they help people. To stand out from the competition, instead highlight why you do what you do. Emphasizing your brand's motivations helps create an emotionally compelling and memorable brand story. It can also establish you in your market as an authority with experience and knowledge.

Transcend generalities by answering this question: Why should people care about what my firm has to say? Boasting or self-congratulation could make clients wary, but revealing some unknown or personal facts about a brand helps to humanize it. For example, you could share something about the origins of your firm. Drawing attention to the geographic location of your office

Performing an audit on the internal and external nature of your firm can help you understand it better and therefore see the ways to differentiate it from competitors in your marketing campaign.

can also make for an appealing brand story for people seeking legal counsel in your area.

#### Consistency

Keep your brand promise consistent and your firm's identity as unified as possible. The most effective brand storytelling is woven into various aspects of the overall brand strategy. It becomes part of your company's message architecture and its identity, following your team members everywhere. The content and imagery should be consistent across all platforms including social media, websites and blog posts.

#### Setting the right tone

The tone of the brand story, including wording and imagery, should reflect the values, emotions and experiences you want people to associate your brand with. Design your story to arouse a specific emotion in your target audience — fear, anger, happiness, hope — in order to mobilize people into action. For example, if your firm deals with veterans issues, you could highlight the challenges veterans face in receiving the benefits they deserve. The power of the story ultimately lies in the emotional response it evokes in its audience.

Even before you start creating your brand story, it is essential to determine who your target audience is and identify your place in the market. After all, your clients define your brand. Research your firm's past trends, current clients and strongest areas of business. Law firms covering a broad range of practice areas

should pinpoint which of their services are used most often and can also determine factors clients interested in different services have in common. Doing your research will allow you to select and target your most important demographics. Focusing on your areas of expertise and marketing within that niche will help you stand out from competitors. For example, a criminal defense attorney might discover that the drug defense niche is the most relevant for his client base. Firms are understandably inclined to shy away from the idea of narrowing their target audience because they are worried about losing other clients. However, successful storytelling must appeal to prospective clients on a personal level, which requires honing in on their specific needs.

Developing customer personas is another critical step in establishing a brand story for your firm. Personas group and define the characteristics, habits and profiles of clients. They also provide insight into the emotional and behavioral triggers behind individual customers within a particular niche.





After researching your clients, prospects and competitors, the next step is to analyze that data to develop user profiles. Most firms will find that they have more than one audience type to which they want to market, but limiting yourself to four or five personas avoids confusion. And then, your research will help you determine what kind of content to create to target your clients.

Another powerful tool is Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis. SWOT is used to determine areas for improvement. identify trends and obstacles and evaluate a firm's overall direction.

Performing an audit on the internal and external nature of your firm can help you understand it better and therefore see the ways to differentiate it from competitors in your marketing campaign. For example, you might discover that, despite having a solid reputation for its service, your firm does not have enough of an online presence. In that case, a potential opportunity could be using social media to reach new clients, while a possible threat could be that competitors who offer the same services and are more visible online would snatch up potential clients before they even knew your firm existed.

When developing a brand story, in addition to storytelling, firms can also implement a more collaborative processes: storymaking. While storytelling can be described as a brand's monologue to potential clients, storymaking is the process of making the brand's audience the storytellers. What makes storymaking different is that marketers actively solicit, curate and redistribute the content created, posted and shared by their target audience, as opposed to the controlled and direct distribution of regular storytelling.

The key to storymaking is to find stories that tap meaningfully into people's deep emotions. The concept of storymaking is based on the idea that people trust user-generated content — such as testimonials, reviews and Tweets — more than content that comes directly from a brand. In a 2013 study, Nielson found that 84 percent of consumers trusted word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family above all other sources of advertising. Today, skeptical clients do not trust companies to be objective; all firms claim they are the best at what they do. However, even skeptics can be influenced by a powerful example or story that provides proof.

To have an effective marketing strategy, your brand needs to use both storytelling and storymaking. Although storymaking is usually the most convincing way to share a brand's story, storytelling remains a valuable device to impart important brand ideas and spark audience participation. Marketers still need to use storytelling to provide context to the storymaking by explaining what the curated content means and who benefits from it. To help your brand stand out and reach different people, offer engaging, personalized stories that your target audience finds relatable.

Good storymaking occurs when clients make the brand story a part of their own life stories. One of the most successful recent examples of this is Coca Cola's "Share a Coke" campaign, which connected with people on an emotional level by giving them the ability to share stories about personalized Coke bottles.

In the legal marketing context, when clients share their success stories about your services, potential clients in similar situations feel connected with

#### **HOW CAN YOU TELL** YOUR STORY?

The more relatable your narrative is, the more loyalty you will spark. Some elements that contribute to developing a compelling brand story are:

#### AUTHENTICY

An authentic brand story is true to your firm's values and mission statement, aligning strongly with the services you offer to clients while remaining genuine and heartfelt.

#### **BEING MEMORABLE**

Emphasizing the why of your brand allows you to create an emotionally compelling brand story that is memorable. It also establishes you as an authority in your market with experience and knowledge.

#### CONSISTENCY

The most effective brand storytelling becomes part of your company's message architecture and its identity, following your team members everywhere. The content and imagery should be consistent across all platforms including social media, websites and blog posts.

#### SETTING THE RIGHT TONE

Design your story to arouse a specific emotion in your target audience – fear, anger, happiness, hope – in order to mobilize people into action. The power of the story ultimately lies in the emotional response it evokes in its audience.

them in empathy, envy or something in between, and that in turn can make them feel an emotional connection to your firm — or at least grab their attention in a meaningful way. Once you have determined your brand story and content strategy, the next step is to implement storytelling through content that will capture your audience's attention.

Equally important to the stories your marketing materials tell, is how those stories are told. A clear, compelling writing style gets your point across and makes the audience excited to hear more.

Authenticity is crucial to copywriting. Think about what tone, voice and communication style your audience will value and is appropriate to your services. Decide whether the language should be conversational, formal or somewhere in between. If you are overly formal and use too much legal jargon, you risk alienating potential clients. Oversimplifying things, on the other hand, could lead to less trust in your brand.

The growth of social media presents a valuable avenue for storytelling. Recent research from Econsultancy shows that 71 percent of brands plan to invest more heavily in social media in the coming years to reach new followers and build brand reputation.

Why not let your clients tell your story for you through social media? Much of today's popular social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, are highly compatible with visual storytelling; they include many ways to integrate photos, videos, infographics and other visuals, which make your campaign more dynamic. Rather than using social media networks as just another

distribution channel, view them as powerful conversational platforms for forging emotional connections with your clients. Seek to make your brand more accessible by addressing concerns users post to social media. When they have comments and suggestions about your services, listen and respond whenever possible.

powerful ways of engaging with potential clients. By podcasting about topical issues, firms can deepen their relationship with their target audience and become woven into the fabric of people's everyday lives — the daily commute, for example. Podcasts build brand awareness by creating a community of listeners who are interested in your brand.

Authenticity is crucial to copywriting. Think about what tone, voice and communication style your audience will value and what is relevant to your practice. Decide whether language should be conversational, formal or somewhere in between.

When using social media for storytelling, the key is to choose social networking platforms that support your brand image and best convey your brand's voice. For law firms, Facebook's timeline format and diverse user base is effective for promoting brand awareness.

Twitter can also be useful for sharing opinions on topical issues and relating the values and personality of the practice. The image-centric nature of Instagram, on the other hand, is not necessarily the ideal platform for law firms.

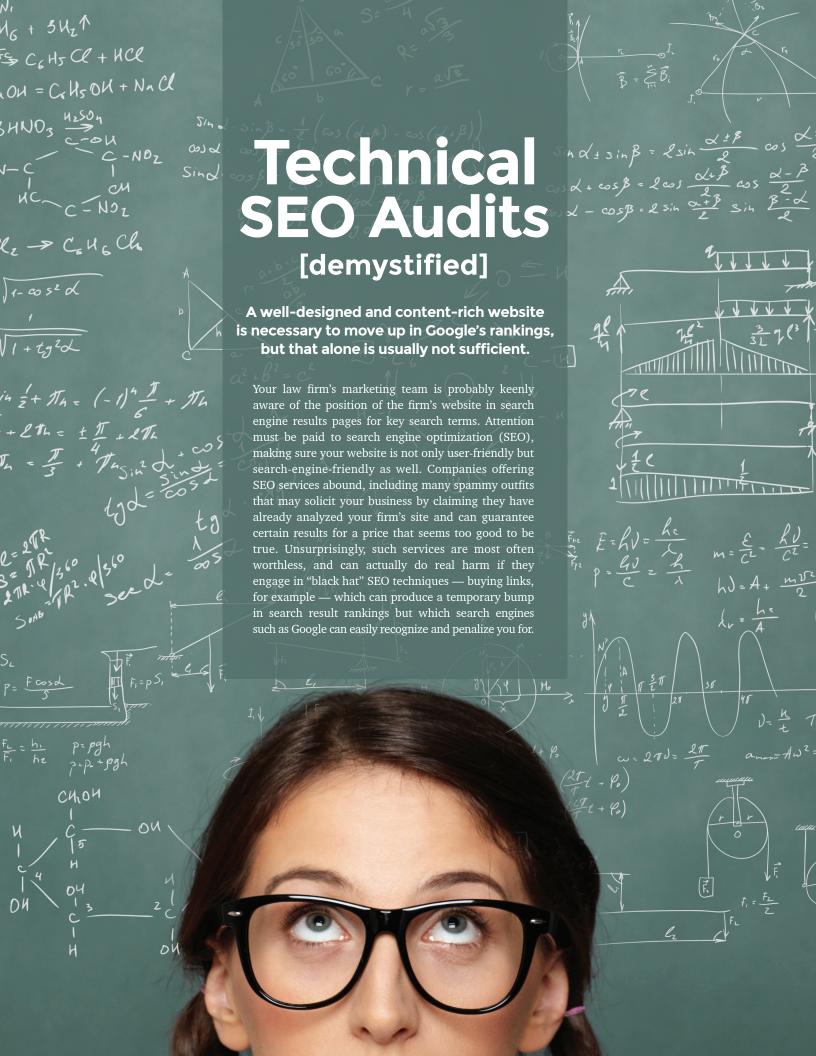
Focus on creating valuable content that viewers will want to share. Every single piece of content you post should support your brand image. Use tools such as BuzzSumo to find the content pieces that are performing well in your industry. Relevant, memorable and evocative brand stories that are shareable can help you harness word of mouth and build a strong, loyal client base. Podcasting and videos also provide

Photographs can add another level of personal connection to your website, print materials and social media. The key is to be as authentic as possible. You may be tempted to use stock images on your branded website, but awkward stock photos can undermine your credibility. Instead, consider using custom photography, which can be of great help in branding and storytelling.

A professional photographer can convey your true brand story through photographs that are a pleasure to look at. If you do decide to use stock images, make sure you are highly selective and choose quality images. Mixing some good stock images with custom photography can be quite effective.

Brand storytelling goes beyond what you write on your website and share online with your clients. It encompasses how you communicate your law firm's message and values. Ideally, your brand story will be a constantly evolving conversation between you and your audience.

- Dipal Parmar



Investing in real SEO is a significant undertaking, and your relationship with a legitimate SEO company begins with a comprehensive SEO audit of your firm's website.

#### WHAT IS AN SEO AUDIT?

An SEO audit is an analysis of a website's performance, including the many factors that contribute to the site's ability to rank well in search engine results. Many different types of SEO audits may be conducted, depending on the specific needs or concerns of a law firm's marketing team. An SEO audit may focus on a specific issue. Some audits just assess a site for potential penalty issues or analyze a site's gaps in relation to competitors. A comprehensive general SEO audit of a website will include analysis of these issues, as well as many other factors that contribute to the site's overall health in SEO terms.

A new comprehensive SEO audit should be part of the process any time a law firm is planning a redesign of its website or considering hiring a new website company or SEO firm. Even when a law firm is happy with its current website and SEO services, a comprehensive annual or biannual SEO audit is an important part of website upkeep, just like tracking key data on an ongoing basis.

### WHAT SHOULD LAW FIRMS LOOK FOR IN AN AUDIT?

An SEO audit must begin with data. The company conducting the audit will need access to the data analysis tools that your firm has in place. Examples include Google Analytics, Google Webmaster Tools, Bing Webmaster Tools and Omniture/Adobe Marketing. SEO firms may also make use of other data collection and organization tools, such as Screaming Frog.

In addition, your law firm and the SEO company conducting the audit will need to discuss the firm's past SEO strategies, including successes, failures and questions raised. Another important step is to establish a clear understanding of what you are paying for and what the company is committing to deliver.

When choosing an SEO firm to conduct an audit, or judging the quality of past SEO services you have received, a key element to look at is the human expertise and analysis that goes into an audit. After all, the data collection can be automatically performed using the tools mentioned above, and certain issues such as broken links, missing tags or descriptions and duplicate content can be identified without much human involvement.

The real value to your firm will come from the way an experienced SEO

# The specs:

#### An SEO Audit will:

#### [analyze]

- Backlinks: in general terms and in terms of the firm's competition
- Internal links: anchor text and site architecture
- Content keywords that affect the website's performance in search engine results
- Social sharing: including ease of content sharing and how often they do it
- Conversion data and factors affecting conversion optimization
- The site's responsiveness on mobile devices

#### [review]

- → The site's **hosting**, server metrics, downtime and caching
- Technical SEO attributes such as meta descriptions, alt and title tags for images and SEO-friendly URLs
- → The site's **performance** using different operating systems, web browsers and situations such as when users have disabled Javascript

#### [research]

- → Measure the site's loading speed and ways to improve it
- > Probe for disreputable backlinks that may hurt performance
- Search for duplicate content to be replaced with unique content
- > Investigate the firm's social media strategy and links
- → Search for evidence of **penalty issues** or other **red flags**
- → Investigate security vulnerabilities



expert uses the data to analyze the performance of your firm's website and recommend actions that will improve your marketing position. It is easy to produce voluminous data relevant to the health of a website.

In addition to the numbers, a comprehensive SEO audit from a reputable firm will include a written report with detailed analysis, red flag warnings and action steps, and a qualified SEO expert will be able to explain the ways in which the data support recommendation of one approach over another.

#### **HOW TO USE AN SEO AUDIT** TO STRENGTHEN A FIRM'S MARKETING POSITION

An SEO audit is like a visit to the doctor. It may simply be time for your annual checkup; you may be in good health, looking for advice about how to stay that way. Or you might have sought help, knowing that something is not right. In that case you need a diagnosis and a prescription. There are certain elements that your prescription — the recommended action steps contained in your SEO audit — should always include.

First, any weaknesses and red flags need to be identified and addressed. If, in the past, your firm mistakenly employed a disreputable SEO firm or you were targeted by a competitor using unethical practices, then you may now be suffering a penalty for spammy backlinks or other problems. Your site may have issues with a slow loading speed, broken links, duplicate content or missing tags or descriptions. Your SEO expert's plan should address these issues. If Google has assessed penalties, the problem can often be addressed by disavowing bad backlinks, eliminating keyword stuffing and other actions. Issues

regarding the functionality of the site can be addressed by improving the site's architecture, replacing low-quality content or exploring better hosting options.

Part of every serious SEO action plan is assessing the strength of your competitors. The best areas for your firm to focus on are those in which your competitors are gaining an advantage by using proven SEO techniques such as publishing superior content and building authoritative backlinks. However, your SEO expert should have an action plan that includes more than just copying the competition.

SEO techniques are constantly evolving. Stagnant websites drop in the search rankings and the sites using solid SEO techniques vigorously compete for the top search positions. However, once a large number of sites are all using a certain technique, it loses value. That means sites can gain an advantage by being willing to experiment with creative new techniques. Make sure your SEO expert is looking not just at where the competition is now, but also at where your site needs to be to pull ahead of the competition in the future.

Finally, an effective SEO strategy should be focused. Although it is often necessary to work on several different fronts at once, with so many tasks to be accomplished, there is a danger of your SEO strategy devolving into just doing a little bit of everything. Your SEO expert should be able to present a plan that is correctly prioritized, with a clear delineation between minor but important issues that can be corrected immediately, ongoing tasks such as maintenance, production of content, monitoring of performance and the implementation of a long-term strategy to accomplish the firm's goals.

#### SEO AUDITS: WHAT. WHY AND HOW

An SEO audit must begin with data, but a key element is the human expertise and analysis that goes into an audit.

#### **WHAT**

An SEO audit is an analysis of a website's performance, including the many factors that contribute to the site's ability to rank well in search engine results. Even when a firm is happy with its current website and SEO services, a comprehensive annual or biannual SEO audit is an important part of site upkeep.

SEO techniques are constantly evolving. Stagnant websites drop in the search rankings and the sites using solid SEO techniques vigorously compete for the top search positions. However, once a large number of sites are all using a certain technique, it loses value. That means sites can gain an advantage by being willing to experiment

#### **HOW**

SEO firms may will use data collection and organization tools to collect critical data about the site. In addition, you will need to discuss past SEO strategies, including successes, failures and questions raised. You must also determine whether you are performing a general audit or an audit for a specific issue.

- Brendan Conley



# NOBODY LIKES TO BE LEFT IN THE DARK

While many law firm marketing companies put up walls between you and your statistics, we decided to install a window. Follow trends, view your link portfolio, track rankings, follow competitors and more in the newly redesigned CLM Lounge.





#### PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

#### Can EagleEye Agreement Checker help lawyers quickly create contracts?

EagleEye Agreement Checker is designed to help lawyers craft more accurate contracts by identifying and eliminating issues such as ambiguity and inconsistency. The program, which has an impressive ability to review and find issues with legal documents, could help attorneys reduce turnaround time, produce more accurate contracts and spend more time actually creating legal content.

When writing complex documents, lawyers often begin with a similar document they have used in the past, or a boilerplate form of the document. The use of standard clauses is common. These techniques make it faster to draw up legal documents without omitting important information, but it also requires significant editing and attention to detail to match them to the specifics of the case. Often, the first draft of a new legal document does not yet follow the facts of the case it is to be used in, or it lacks clarity. A close eye for consistency is essential when bringing a legal document to its final form.

EagleEye Agreement Checker is a speedy assistant for much of this process. It helps ensure accurate references, punctuation and review of terms. The program, which was first released in 2012 and has recently been released in a third version, helps attorneys create stronger contracts more efficiently. It can be used with Microsoft Word.

EagleEye Version 3.1, the recently released update, built on the previous incarnations' strongest points, has a new intelligent interface which makes it more intuitive to use. One of the most substantial improvements is that the new version lets attorneys customize the program to look for agreements specific to their fields.

Once a draft is prepared, EagleEye can develop lists of things like references, incorrect references, inconsistent phrasing, defined terms and problems with defined terms. It can also be used to evaluate structural issues such as lack of numbering or errors in editing. All of

these functions can be performed with a single click which creates a list in a moveable window pane next to the document. It is also possible to review and compare terms across multiple related documents.

The defined terms feature is one of the most powerful tools found in EagleEye. After creating a list of defined terms, the user can add new forms of those terms and also examine the language that precedes definitions. The analysis can find instances where terms are used but not defined, defined without being used and used before being defined.

A wide variety of features are available, and the workflow is designed so that using one feature often leads the user to the next logical feature. For example, users can view all errors in the document, then choose to ignore or address errors; ignored errors can be viewed in a list and un-ignored later on. Users can also add comments throughout the document for review.

Because EagleEye's interface is very intuitive, the program is simple to use and navigate without any extra training; a short period of exploring the software is sufficient to become familiar with most of its uses. Lawyers can also adapt how they use the program depending on their particular needs and preferences.

Using EagleEye is much faster and more effective than culling legal documents for errors and inconsistencies yourself, and most attorneys who work with contracts will find that the software provides a strong return on investment. With plans costing as little as \$299/year, many attorneys will find EagleEye well worth the money.

Although nothing can replace a human eye in the final review of a document, EagleEye is a valuable tool for improving and streamlining the review process, polishing the document and drawing out errors that are not immediately obvious. This results in a better, more airtight document in a shorter amount of time.

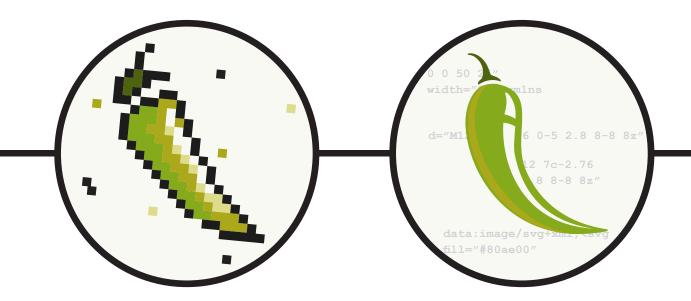


#### **ENSURE ACCURACY** AND CONSISTENCY

Once a draft contract is prepared, EagleEye can develop lists of things like references, incorrect references, inconsistent phrasing, defined terms and problems with defined terms. It can also be used to evaluate structural issues such as lack of numbering or errors in editing. These functions can be performed with a single click.

Plans cost as little as \$299 per year. Get a free demo at eagleeye.microsystems.com

- Alisha Corbitt



# Rethinking Graphics on the Internet

Optimizing web pages is a never-ending task, and when every millisecond matters, vector based graphics are the way to go.

It was hard to discuss web design in 2014 without referencing responsive web design. Considering the growing landscape of screen sizes, designers and developers were, and still are, looking to code a device agnostic layout that would work anywhere.

#### What exactly is the problem?

Opening any page on the internet involves a handful of protocols, handshakes and hops across the globe. Many of these processes happen automatically as far as website owners and visitors are concerned, and they are out of the control of the general population.

The most effective way to improve a website's performance is to optimize the backend code on the server that produces the necessary pages and to ensure that the final product renders quickly on the user's browser. Delivering pages to users requires bandwidth, which, according to internet service providers, is increasingly hard to come by.

Using CNN.com as an example, the size of the homepage HTML and CSS code is 100 kilobytes. After factoring in images, scripts and other media, the total size of the page comes to 3.6 megabytes. More than 75% of the total download is bandwidth-heavy media. In order for that media to vary to fit different users' screens, the page must include the code necessary for several HTTP requests. The extra requests can easily slow the loading of a webpage. Responsive web design shaves page load times by efficiently condensing a desktop, tablet and mobile website into one document. Optimizing pages to be as lightweight as possible without sacrificing appearance is a top priority for today's web developers and their clients.

#### We've had the solution for years Two main image formats are used online: bitmaps and vector graphics.

Bitmaps save image information as a grid of pixels. These are the instructions that draw the image. Bitmaps are the most common type of image around the web because that is how photos are saved on your computer's hard drive.

Vector graphics, including scalable vector graphics (SVG) save image information as a vector, or mathematically defined path. Compared to their bitmap counterparts, vectors are significantly smaller because their file contents is instructions for rather than a map of an image. Vectors are ideal for simple graphics such as share icons and can even be complex enough for a logo.

Every major mobile and desktop browser (except IE8) has basic support of SVG. It works identically to using bitmaps on your site, except instead of each file needing a separate download, you can serve the image along with the CSS.

#### Not only smart but also stylish

In addition to including your images with your content in one swift download, there are tons of impressive visual effects you can do with SVG. Because the entire image's maths are visible and editable for Javascript and CSS, complex and fluid animations can be rendered without using Flash. Considering the security issues and hardware saturation Flash presents for its users, working around it is a great benefit.

Applying stylish effects to text is traditionally done in image editing software and saved as a bitmap for the web. The benefit to this is that you get text that looks exactly as desired and looks consistent across different screens, but using a static image means making a new image for each piece of text.

## **The SVG Revolution**

With SVG, images are served along with the CSS, eliminating the need for downloads.

Traditionally: Images are added to websites by referencing the image file in the HTML document with CSS code, which looks like this:

#shareicon { background-image:url("/images/logo.svg"); }

The issue: This creates an additional HTTP request that can impact your site's performance when you have dozens of images to load.

The new method: Use math to embed the image directly in the CSS file:

#shareicon { background-image:url("/data:image/svg+xml,<svg fill="#14668a" height="30" viewBox="0 0 50 25" width="21" xmlns="http:// www.w3.org/2000/svg"><path d="M12 7c-2.76 0-5 2.8 8-8 8z"/></svg>"); }

That may look like a bunch of random numbers and letters, but it is actually the contents of an SVG image generated with image editing software. Adding images this way greatly improves your site's load time. And your CSS is cached in the user's browser after the initial load.

With SVG there are extensive filter effects extrusions: transformations, shadows, borders — almost every text effect you can make in Photoshop. These filter effects are applied only if the browser is supported, and will show up as normal text as a fallback.

Since the structure of SVG is humanreadable XML, editing filters can be easier than navigating your way around an image editor and can be done with any text editor. Styling text this way adds computation time to the user's browser, but the average person has a far better computer than what was common 10 years ago.

Knowing when SVG is right for you Someone discovering SVG for the first time might think it was the solution to all of the web's problems. This is half true, but there are still some very good reasons to continue using bitmaps. Photos taken with a camera should always be saved as JPGs since the math required to perfectly render them in vectors does not exist.

SVG images work best for small graphics which are used to enhance the page, but are not a core part of its uses. These include things like bulleted lists, social network share icons, repeating backgrounds and simple images made up of lines and shapes.

Using SVG filters is not the best choice in all situations because their support varies from browser to browser. Effects such as text shadows and 3D transformation are actually doable in CSS and have much wider support. Using more advanced filters will require more research.

Web design was simpler when everyone had the same desktop resolution of 1024 x 768. Vector based graphics are not a new invention, but they are gaining momentum since they update practices that have been around since the web's early days. Delivering your website's content is top priority, and now you can make it look good without slowing down.

- Justin Torres



Have you ever experienced the heart-stopping moment when you realize you just sent a private email to a list of people who should not see it?



Email security is a serious concern for attorneys who may have to send vital, private documents and correspondence via email. Protecting the confidentiality of client data is one of a lawyer's core duties, and that principle is reflected in Preamble of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

Is there a way to safeguard lawyers from making a major mistake — from accidentally revealing case strategy to opposing counsel or sending a client's confidential information to a third party?

Technology company Litéra has created a solution to help prevent this kind of error while also boosting productivity. Litéra SmartSend, a Microsoft Outlook add-in, is a great way to reduce the risk of accidentally disclosing sensitive information to the wrong recipient. SmartSend creates a safe Microsoft Outlook environment by ensuring lawyers sending sensitive emails with confidential attachments are alerted to common mistakes like replying to all, replying when bcc'd and replying within long threads. SmartSend also helps keep workflow contained in Outlook, allowing users to manage attachments as well as name, bind and zip .pdf files without leaving the Outlook environment.

Litéra's VP of Client Development, Joy Heath Rush said, "We think of SmartSend as email 'evolved.' SmartSend allows lawyers to use Outlook as they wish while minimizing the risks associated with email 'Oops!' moments and streamlining the attachment process.



"Imagine being able to attach documents in a specific order from a variety of repositories, rename and/or reorder them and even bind them right from within Outlook. Imagine being saved the embarrassment (and risk) of replying to all to a message where you are a bcc or forwarding a message with unintended content 10 messages deep in the thread."

A simple email mistake can carry enormous consequences. For a lawyer, inadvertently sharing private material could result in censure or even disbarment. Any information that gets into the wrong hands poses significant problems.

Sixty-two percent of all data breaches in 2008 were caused by a significant error or an internal mistake, according to the Data Breach Investigations Report (2008-2015) published by Verizon in 2014. The same report revealed that 285 million records were compromised in some way in 2009, a pattern that continues to repeat itself.

Last year's numbers indicate that 29.4 percent of data breaches were the result of email mistakes. Miscellaneous errors, which amounted to 30 percent of total errors, involve data sent to the wrong person. Given these statistics and the number of lawyers, paralegals, research assistants and interns who have access to client information, the potential for mistakes becomes obvious. SmartSend offers support for these busy professionals.

#### What does Litéra SmartSend do?

SmartSend's main purpose is to reduce the chances of sending critical information to unintended recipients and up the level of productivity for those needing to handle email attachments. Since it is an add-in, your firm must use Outlook in order to take advantage of the software.

Think of a scenario in which an attorney needs to send an email about an important change in strategy for an upcoming case. There are seven people on the email thread, and the attorney needs to attach documents. How does SmartSend protect that attorney from sending information places where it is not supposed to go?

"With a focus on non-disruptive integration into day-to-day user workflow, Litera immediately impacts efficiency while scaling to any size office to provide maximum administrative control and information security," said Rush.

SmartSend offers the ability to tailor attorney interaction with the software to a specific user or group. Most of the behind the scenes work is invisible to users, making the add-in relatively user-friendly. Litéra suggests it may also be integrated with Netdocs, Open Text, Microsoft SharePoint, Autonomy iManage and all leading document management systems.

To run Litéra in your law office you would need Outlook 2007/2010/2013. Windows Vista/Windows 7/Windows 8, Internet Explorer 7 and above, Mozilla Firefox, Safari or Google Chrome.

SmartSend was first listed in the top 100 Microsoft solution providers by CIO Review Magazine in August of 2014.

- Kerrie Spencer

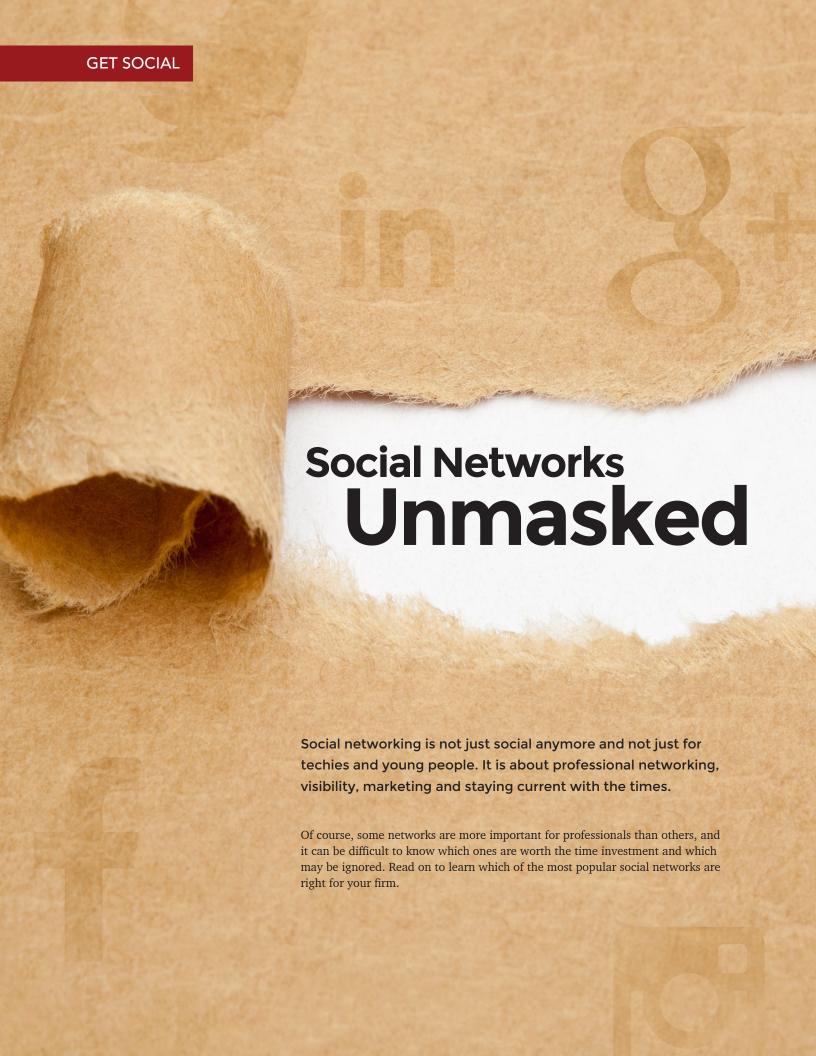
Litéra has the following features, designed to prompt sober second thought and double check actions to protect against allowing privileged information in an email to be sent to the wrong place:

- · Alerts an attorney who is replying to all as a bcc
- · Alerts a lawyer who is replying to a very long email thread that may contain sensitive material
- · Alerts users who reply to all when there are numerous recipients and limiting reply all
- Guards against incorrect auto completion of email addresses
- Consistently marks emails with Attorney-Client Privileged Communications

Before documents or emails are sent, Litéra allows the attorney to do multiple tasks on one screen. Those tasks include, but are not limited to:

- · Renaming files pulled from the computer or other locations before attachments are sent
- · Zip, bind or print attachments to PDF
- · Clean Metadata off all, or certain, files (optional action)
- Content comparison









#### LinkedIn

LinkedIn is all about professional networking. It has over 350 million users, including over one million attorneys. For a company of any size to be completely absent from LinkedIn would be akin to foregoing a website — unwise and unprofessional.

If you are not already on LinkedIn, getting started is simple. Create profiles both for your firm and yourself. Feel free to start with just the essentials — a logo or photograph, contact information and website address. This is far better than having nothing at all.

Soon, though, you should focus on making your LinkedIn profile a reflection and extension of your website. Tell about your firm's strengths, story and mission. List job openings. Link to your blog posts or to news articles that interest you. List your awards, certifications and the organizations to which you belong. Once your presence on the site is fleshed out and compelling, you will want to take advantage of LinkedIn's unique professional networking features that can directly increase your business.

Relationships, called "connections" on LinkedIn, are the heart of any social network. Look up attorneys or other professionals with whom you have good relationships in real life and add them.

Some of your connections will list skills on their profiles. You have the option of "endorsing" them for one or more skills, and they may return the favor. Some people place more importance on endorsements than others due to their impersonal nature. Recommendations are a more personal alternative to endorsements. A recommendation includes personalized text explaining why you hold the person in professional esteem. Consider endorsing or recommending a few connections. These can lead to valuable referral relationships or strengthen existing ones.

Introductions are another useful LinkedIn tool. Suppose you have a good relationship with a non-competing local attorney. On the attorney's profile, you notice a client who you know has legal issues that match your skill set. This client's LinkedIn profile will present a badge saying "2nd"—he is a second-degree connection. You could reach out directly to him, but that might be seen as inappropriate to both him and your friend. Instead, use LinkedIn to request an introduction through your mutual connection.

you post to the site. This is perhaps your most valuable asset for online outreach. Whether you make a concerted effort to persuade people to like your page is up to you. But you should absolutely post links to your blog entries and press releases, because those who do like your page are also likely to click those links.

Connect with and follow your clients and colleagues if you wish, particularly if they initiate the connection. But as

Maintaining complete and up-to-date contact information on all Google services is imperative – more so than with any other social network. Search for "Google My Business" and make sure all information about your firm is accurate.

LinkedIn Groups are places where people can post articles, links and discussion threads on a variety of topics. They bring together people from a particular industry or people who are simply interested in a particular topic. Look for groups for your local bar association, for attorneys in your practice area or groups in which you could expect to find prospective clients. Look at fellow attorneys' profiles to see which groups they have joined.



#### **Facebook**

Facebook is by many measures the largest social network in the world. It boasts well over a billion users, including individuals, businesses and organizations of all kinds. Facebook use is so widespread that, just like with LinkedIn, a business's complete absence from it might be regarded as odd or unprofessional. A basic presence with up-to-date logos, contact information, and website address is a necessity for your law firm.

Your firm's Facebook page will have a "Like" button. Users who click this button have a chance to see anything a business owner, do not be overly concerned with the "networking" part of this still largely social network.



#### Google+

Google+, or "Google Plus," is a complex and sometimes controversial social network for several reasons. By some measures, it has more users than even Facebook, but the number of active users is much smaller. Some users swear Google+ fosters richer discussion and better content discovery than other networks, and that is likely true in some fields. Others call Google+ a "ghost town."

To further complicate matters, the sites and tools that business owners use to manage their profiles on Google's various services have gone by several different names. It is currently called "Google My Business," and it presents a unified way to manage your presence on Google Search, Google Maps and Google+. Maintaining complete and up-to-date contact information on all Google services is imperative — more so than with any other social network. Search for "Google My Business" and make sure all of the search giant's information about your business is accurate.

Once you have completed that task, your firm will have a Google+ page if it did not already. From this point, you may regard the site as a sort of "Facebook Junior." Posting links to new content at your site is productive, but not essential, and building a network of connections does no harm, but is far less important than on LinkedIn.



#### **Twitter**

Twitter is a network on which posts, called "tweets," are very brief; they are limited to 140 characters. As with Facebook, tweeting links to blog posts and press releases is a good idea, and can be automated with third-party tools. The impact of your Twitter posts is likely to be small, so the time investment should be small as well.

For most attorneys, Twitter has more value as a tool to gather information than

to disseminate it. One notable subset of Twitter users is reporters. If your practice area involves breaking news such as injuries, accidents or disasters, follow the best reporters and broadcasters in your area. You can also stay abreast of developments in your field by following the writers, power-brokers and lawmakers shaping your industry.

Many of your clients probably have some presence on Twitter. Following them is an easy way to understand them better and keep up with their lives. If your clients have high public profiles, they probably have many tweets directed at them from the public. These are called "mentions," and you can find them with a search of your client's Twitter handle.



#### Instagram

Instagram is a fast-growing network that is very popular among young people. It

is focused on pictures and short videos. Every post must include one or the other, and may include a caption. You might consider an Instagram account if you or an employee has a penchant for photography. Or, if your practice involves public relations or representing artists and entertainers, your colleagues and client pool might already be present on Instagram in large numbers. In that case, a presence on the network is a great way to stay connected, even if your own posts are limited.

Any law firm can have some fun and get some exposure on Instagram by posting pictures of its offices, logos and attorneys, along with brief biographies. But unless others in your professional network use the service in such large numbers as to make your absence conspicuous, you can safely regard Instagram as completely optional.

- Ryan Conley

ÀW FIRM NEWSWIRE

# WE HAVE SOME EXPLAINING TO DO





#### REPORT: TURN DOWN THE VOLUME ON LINKS

Your profile of backlinks might sound like an ambiguous list, lurking in the back-alleys of the internet, but in reality it is the foundation of your website's search placement and a vital component of your relationship with Google. Like the roots of a plant, backlinks extend a website's reach into the internet and drive new traffic sources that help it grow. And according to our research, possessing a large number of backlinks is substantially less valuable than having a few high-quality and high-traffic links.

Our team collected backlink profile data from the top-placing lawyer websites for a wide array of practice areas in large metropolitan markets in the U.S. What we discovered was interesting and tremendously significant: roughly half of the #1 ranked lawyer websites for competitive search terms like "personal injury lawyer" had fewer backlinks than the #2 ranked website. Additionally, the slimmer, #1 ranked sites frequently linked from higher-quality resources.

#### What is a backlink portfolio?

Before digging into the meaning and consequences of these findings, here is some background, agnostic of SEO jargon:

The backlink portfolio is one of the most important factors calculated in Google's cryptic search-placement algorithm because it is highly reflective of the quality and nature of the internet content that is connected to a website. While Google accounts for numerous factors when indexing a website's backlink profile, two crucial areas of emphasis for SEO are "quality" and "informativeness." Essentially, Google's relationship with your website will improve if traffic is being directed to it from high-quality resources that provide useful (and relevant) information to searchers.

#### Why are we interested in the correlation between link-volume and search placement?

In simpler times, link-building was a numbers game that placed the greatest emphasis on sheer volume of links. Amidst Google's efforts to achieve some level of quality

Behold, the enigmatic backlink portfolio: probably the most important element of your website that isn't getting its due diligence.

standardization, the company has eradicated many traditional notions of SEO. Major updates to its search algorithms have dismantled search placement optimization strategies that attempted to garner as many backlinks as possible by creating duplicate listings on business directories, along with numerous other questionable link-building strategies that lack quality content or regular upkeep by their webmaster. Our LAB analysis indicates that these practices are not only ineffective, but in many cases destructive to search rankings.

Now that we know exactly what a backlink profile is and why it is important to your website's search placement, we can consider the implications of our report: lawyer websites that rank best for competitive search queries in high-volume markets emphasize quality as opposed to quantity when it comes to link building. Low-quality link resources can have pernicious consequences. The derivative of this relationship between Google and your website is a particular strategy to building your link profile that is privy to search engine quality standards and considerate of the search terms your potential clients will most often use when looking for a law firm in your practice area.

This data has significant implications for search marketing strategy in any industry, but the most important takeaway for your law firm's website is that when it comes to your backlink portfolio, quality counts. Free tools like SEO Spyglass (www.seo-spyglass.com) enable users to peer into the backlinks of websites, and this is particularly useful for monitoring your own profile for spammy or malicious backlinks that do not contribute generatively to search ranking.

By implementing a strategy that seeks out high-quality channels to circulate your content, your website can improve search placement rankings more effectively than by depositing your website name and link in as many places on the internet as possible.



#### **GOOD LINKING STILL MATTERS**

Like the roots of a plant, backlinks extend a website's reach into the internet and drive new traffic sources that help it grow. Lawyer websites that rank best for competitive search queries in high-volume markets emphasize quality as opposed to quantity when it comes to link building.

Links continue to be integral to the way Google measures site quality.

- Tyler Rhodes



The old methods of search engine marketing are gone. CLM Flagship is a different approach, using internet tides to bring clients ashore. Rise above changing algorithms. Harness the power of creativity to advance your firm. Bring together every resource the internet has to offer. We launch marketing plans that get attention, links and media coverage. *Try Flagship and stop fighting change. Let it power your law firm.* 

Jump onboard before your competitors do.





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