

PageRank Flow Management, Then and Now

Brent D. Payne

The Scenario

Damn! 600+ links? Not exactly optimal for bots or humans!

High Crawl Rate

- ChicagoTribune.com is crawled every 3 – 5 minutes by Googlebot

High PageRank

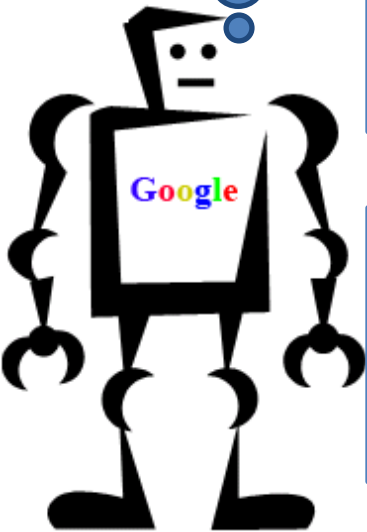
- ChicagoTribune.com has a domain PageRank of 8 (G' Toolbar)

Links on the Homepage

- ChicagoTribune.com normally has 600+ links on the homepage

Googlebot Crawl is Heavily Reliant on Sitemaps

- Nearly 100% of the URLs listed in one of dozens of sitemaps are indexed within minutes of being added to the sitemap
- Crawlability is heavily reliant on sitemap files versus site crawl



PageRank Sculpting History: Process

5 Separate 'SEO Levels'

- From mid-2008 through mid-2009 Tribune sites could assign all links on their site a 'SEO level' between 1 – 5

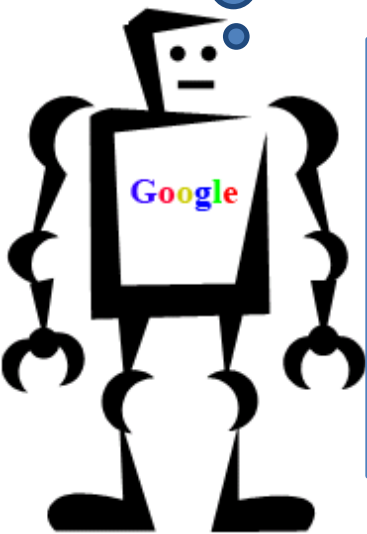
Sitewide 'SEO Level Template' Control

- At anytime, site producers could change the 'SEO level template' for the site
- Changing the 'SEO level template' would assign literally thousands of links on the site with a 'nofollow'
- Example: Setting the 'SEO Level Template' control to '3' would 'nofollow' all links on the site with an SEO level of 3, 4, or 5 to 'nofollow'

Followed Links on the Pages Significantly Reduced

- SEO Level 5 = Approx. 375 followed links on the page = Nightly reset
- SEO Level 4 = Approx. 200 followed links on the page = Slow news day
- SEO Level 3 = Approx. 100 followed links on the page = Normal news day
- SEO Level 2 = Approx. 25 followed links on the page = Themed news day
- **SEO Level 1 = A single followed link on the page = Breaking news day**
 - Note: Recent site redesign has resulted in over 600 followed links on homepage and no SEO Level assignments possible (soon to be fixed).

And people wonder why I changed my algorithm...

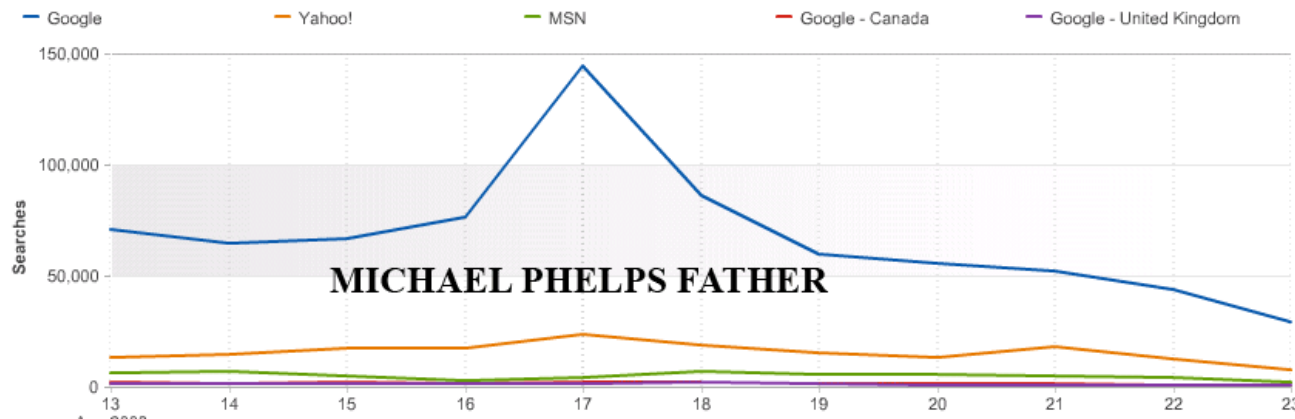


PageRank Sculpting History: Results

Search Engines - Natural Report



Configure Report | Add Metrics | Trended / Ranked | View by: Hour Day Week Month Quarter Year



Starting in mid-2008, SEO policy was to change the SEO Level Template when breaking news occurred.

Repeatedly tracked easy success in G'Web and G'News through the first of the year.

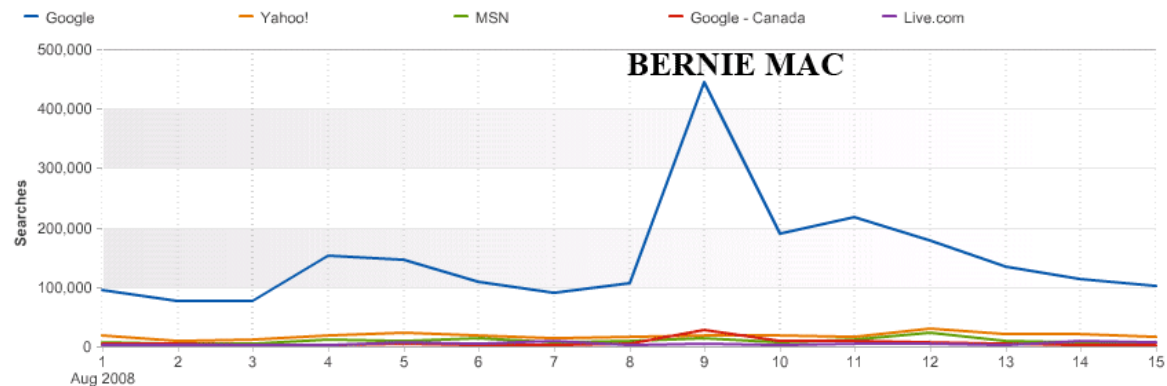
Starting with the Inauguration though, things 'seemed' more difficult but no conclusive results for or against.

By June 2009, site redesigns and CMS changes made the SEO Levels feature non-functioning. (Feature to be reinstated this month.)

Chicago Tribune SEO Visits



Configure Report | Add Metrics | Trended / Ranked | View by: Hour Day Week Month Quarter Year



PageRank Sculpting Present: Process

Completely Dynamic 'Moduled Site Design'

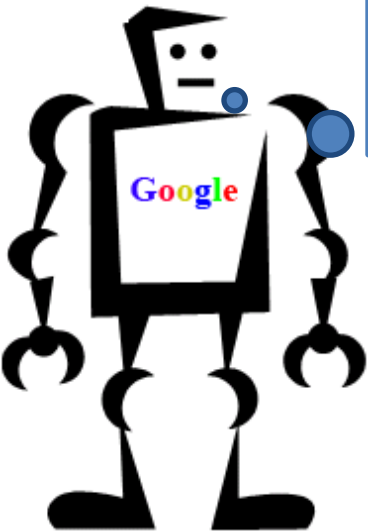
- New site design allows for removal of content modules & links

New SEO Instructions

- During breaking news scenarios remove as many content modules & links from the page as possible

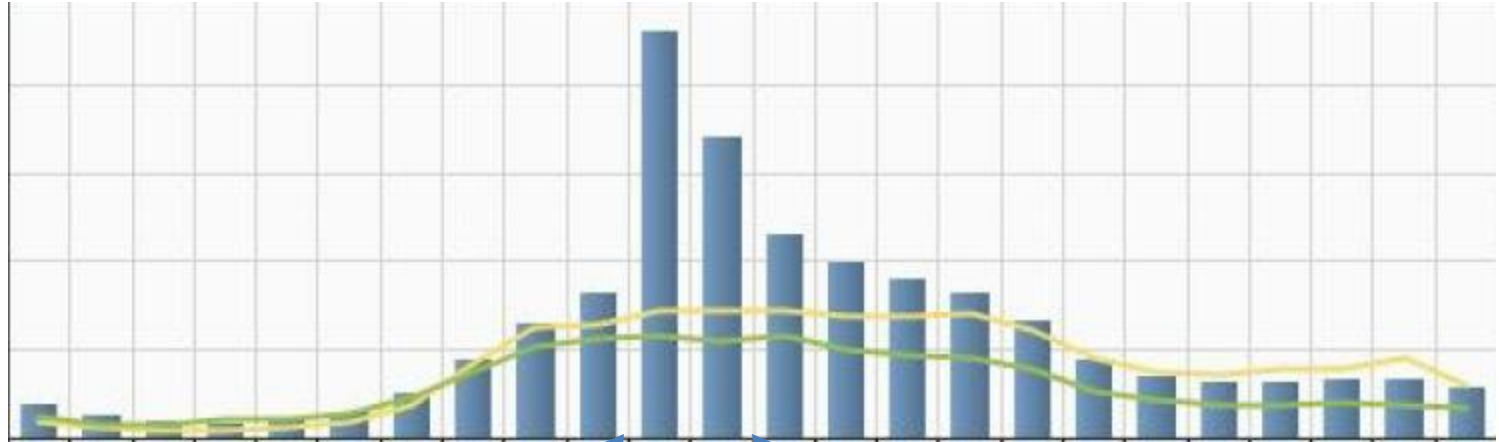
Followed Links on the Pages Significantly Reduced

- Links on the page are significantly reduced from 600+ links to approx. 200 links



Hmm. Now that I've said 'nofollow' doesn't work, I've created a new problem of link sculpting on the page.

Stats from the Test



Reduced site content and HTML links on the Chicago Tribune homepage from 600 links to 200 links.

Replaced the site content and HTML links on the Chicago Tribune homepage back to 600 links.

Results Synopsis

- Seems to have similar impact of what we were seeing in 2008
- More tests needed

Contact Info

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