

A SiteLeads.net White Paper



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Blogging and Corporate IP Vulnerability

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Many corporations are exposed to a new kind of risk – a subtlety of the Internet Age – because of a dependency on a thing called “content”.

If making sales in real estate is about location, location, location, then making sales on the Internet is about content, content and – yes, you’ve guessed it – content.

Introduction

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is about connecting your website with the people on the Internet who are looking for the product or service your company offers. Central to SEO success is making your website attractive to search engines – they must be able match the search words with something on your website – and making that match is dependent upon content.

More and more, the bulk of content that attracts search engines is in the form of blog postings. Blog postings are like short essays typed one by one into websites by individuals – both formally and informally – and in time, the resulting critical mass of content can create a powerful magnet. A company can grow on the basis of the resulting traffic generated by all this – imagine 80% of your sales calls every day coming into your business as a result of search engines sending people your way – but that very dependency creates a risk that most companies don’t see.

In the same way a town might not understand the risk of being destroyed by a flood from the very river that gave birth to the town, a company might not

understand that the “river of business” coming their way can be unplugged or exploited by someone they’ve never met.

Where should you host your blog?

The question many ask is, where should you host your blog, and if it is in the wrong place, how can it be moved to the right place?

In order to answer that question, know that whoever owns, and consequently controls, the domain name upon which the blog is located ultimately possesses the value contained in the blog. Moving a blog to a different domain invalidates all the old links into the original and presents many other challenges.

Whoever owns the domain name of the blog host, owns the value contained in the blog.

A blog is valuable when it contains valuable information, has serious traffic and has many Inbound Links pointing to it. If and when your blog ever grows to that point, as long as you have control over it, you have a number of options open to you, including placing ads – yours or someone else's – on your blog to generate revenue.

When someone else, either an individual or an organization, owns the domain name on which your blog is hosted, they own – and consequently may decide to control – any downstream

revenue opportunities should they decide to exercise that right. That might be perfectly OK with you, and companies like Google – they own the domain name blogspot.com, by the way – are very magnanimous about it, but you should understand that you are “planting trees on another person's land”, if you use such a blog hosting service.

Sharecroppers, Serfs and Bloggers

Another way to describe this dilemma is that you are a kind of “Sharecropper”. Any scholar of American history will explain to you why you don't want to be a sharecropper. The serfs of old England are another such example of workers being exploited by real estate owners. There are countless other examples throughout history and religion – from France and Italy to Islamic Law – where landowners let people use their land for a fee in goods, service or monetary compensation. Such arrangements usually end in tears.

Being of Irish heritage, I have some anxiety around the notion of planting trees on another person's land and I believe today's equivalent of sharecropping and serfdom is that of bloggers posting to a blog on a domain name owned by someone else.

A professional blog posting might be worth about \$100, so consider it a real gift. Would you buy a tree sapling for \$100 and plant it in your neighbor's yard?

It's about the Domain Name

Some free blogging servers, for example Blogger.com (which uses the domain name blogspot.com to house its blogs), allow you to point a domain name directly at your blog. This means that your blog can be at, for example www.johnnysblog.com, even though you set it up under johnnys-great-dog-blog.blogspot.com. Even though the blog is hosted under a domain name owned by Google (blogspot.com), all of your references to the blog use the domain name that you own (johnnysblog.com).

As you go hunting for Inbound Links, always point back to URLs, for example

<http://www.johnnysblog.com/all-about-dogs.html>, that are within a domain name that *you own*. Don't use the blogging software hosting company URL (for example <http://johnnys-great-dog-blog.blogspot.com/all-about-dogs.html>).

Some time in the future, if the owners of the original domain name under the blog ever try to take control of your blog, you can simply move the entire website contents to a hosting company and redirect johnnysblog.com to point to that new location. You can do that redirect because you *own the domain name* johnnysblog.com.

Blogging Capability built into the Website

Professionally run businesses use a Content Management System (CMS, or sometimes called a Web Content Management System, WCMS) to manage their website. There are poor CMSs and there are excellent ones, and everything in between. The SiteLeads.net website is managed using a CMS called Big Medium. Like any good CMS, blogging functionality is built into Big Medium. The blog on www.SiteLeads.net is a part of the fundamental structure of the website and it is therefore owned by the organization that owns the domain name SiteLeads.net.

Make sure you or your company owns the domain name upon which your or their blog is hosted.

Look at the domain name of your blog. For example, the blog at <http://portfolio-living.blogspot.com/> is really owned by the owner of the domain name blogspot.com. Even though I can, for the moment, control the ads I place on that blog, that fact could change in the future; the owners of the domain blogspot.com could change the rules of any advertising hosted on it.

You can't sell what you don't own

If your blog is central to the value of your company or organization, come acquisition time, not owning the domain upon which it is hosted might lessen the amount you could get for your company, or preclude the acquisition altogether.

If you are posting to a newspaper or other blog, know that the newspaper owns the value you create. They should

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be grateful. You are “giving them \$100” with every posting you make.

If it's not too late, make sure your blog is hosted on a domain that your company owns. If you or your company does not own the domain name that hosts your blog, consider migrating everything over to a new blog implemented inside your own website. Add a line and link to the end of each blog posting in the old blog – leaving the old blog entries intact – pointing to the equivalent blog posting in your new blog. This is potentially a lot of work – a bit like transplanting trees – but your blog is part of your intellectual property. It is worth protecting.

Alternatively, start making posts to a new blog – one hosted on a domain you own – in parallel with the older, more established blog. Focus your Inbound Linking efforts on the new blog going forward.

Despite the fact that content posted on domains not controlled by the content investor is at risk, it is sometimes good blogging practice to make high-value blog posts in your own name to high-value and high-trafficked blogs. This can drive traffic to your own site, which is what you might rely upon in the early stages of your website, but more importantly, it will show that you make good faith contributions to communities interested in your subject.

Want to know more?

For more information on Web Content Management Systems and Search Engine Optimization, visit our website: www.siteleads.net, call us at USA 425-985-4464 or email info@siteleads.net. Tell us what your goals are and we will show you how we can help.

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SEO Services for Small Companies

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