

Everything you need to know about the connections between SEO and backlinks

What's in common between backlinks and SEO? To start with, backlink building is one of two major parts of search engine optimisation: on-site SEO (managing keywords and their density, placing internal links, doing dozens of other tasks under direct control) and external SEO (it's under indirect influence which is still manageable, but sees your website as part of the Internet community).

Temps de lecture : minute

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Acquisition of external links may go naturally with websites of esteemed reputation. Their content managers do a great job to attract visitors with high quality of content to be later reposted in social media or blogs. Someone may place a reference to the website as a source of information which was used, demonstrating confidence in the origin and building up its reputation further.

Like with any natural process, it is good for things to go on *naturally* - like bodybuilding is preferably better (although much slower) without supplementary intake of synthetic steroids. However, SEO managers sometimes buy related backlinks to raise traffic faster. By the way, paying is not the only way to acquire backlinks on your own. With a balanced approach to backlink building, it is possible to increase traffic and rankings in no time.

Speaking of which - how are backlinks are related to one and the other?

A major source of traffic

Why not the only one? There are different types of traffic which are confused sometimes. A simple classification by [SmartBug](#) seems logical and without apparent flaws.

Types of Traffic:

- Organic (or “Unpaid”)
- Paid (or “Non-organic”)
- Referral
- Social
- Direct

In this classification, organic and paid types are meant in a sense that traffic was either generated by keywords searching or purchased. Referral traffic can also be of both types, depending on how backlinks were acquired – naturally or in consequence to negotiations with owners of referring external resources.

Organic backlinks are often confused with *natural* ones, being interrelated to a certain extent. The latter didn't find a clear definition even in the [former post](#) of Matt Cutts from Google, but the idea behind natural backlinks resides in being relevant to websites they lead to. They are recognized as being of high quality, and are taken into account by search engines for PageRank calculations. They may still be seen as a source of paid traffic, if were purchased for money.

To find an answer to the question [What is Backlink in Blogging](#) all about, one has to look at the social traffic category. Referral traffic is what brings visitors from external sources, but social media is classified separately due to its high importance.

Acquisition		1,542	1,367	1,749	90.11%	1.30	00:00:47	0.00%	0
Overview		% of Total: 22.35% (6,900)	% of Total: 22.33% (6,121)	% of Total: 21.93% (7,976)	Avg for View: 84.03% (7.24%)	Avg for View: 1.43 (-9.01%)	Avg for View: 00:00:54 (-12.53%)	Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	% of Total: 0.00% (0)
All Traffic									
Channels	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. yandex.ru	862 (55.68%)	720 (52.67%)	1,029 (58.83%)	87.76%	1.39	00:01:01	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Treemaps	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. facebook.com	87 (5.62%)	87 (6.36%)	87 (4.97%)	98.85%	1.01	00:00:01	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Source/Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. t.co	83 (5.36%)	83 (6.07%)	83 (4.75%)	100.00%	1.00	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Referrals	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. click.my.mail.ru	80 (5.17%)	79 (5.78%)	80 (4.57%)	96.25%	1.04	00:00:04	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Google Ads	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. ok.ru	78 (5.04%)	78 (5.71%)	78 (4.46%)	100.00%	1.00	00:00:00	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Search Console	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. l.instagram.com	77 (4.97%)	77 (5.63%)	77 (4.40%)	96.10%	1.04	00:00:04	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Social	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. away.vk.com	69 (4.46%)	69 (5.05%)	69 (3.95%)	98.55%	1.01	00:00:02	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/> 8. yandex.by	30 (1.94%)	27 (1.98%)	41 (2.34%)	90.24%	1.10	00:01:13	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> 9. yandex.kz	30 (1.94%)	25 (1.83%)	33 (1.89%)	87.88%	1.76	00:01:59	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Conversions	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. m.facebook.com	21 (1.36%)	20 (1.46%)	22 (1.26%)	95.45%	1.09	00:00:09	0.00%	0 (0.00%)

Source: Google Analytics

Here is an illustrative example of a known Russian information website. Results for the first week of May show that its traffic was predominantly made of organic Yandex traffic, while the rest is mostly of the referral and social media types (Facebook, Instagram, and ok.ru).

Overview		Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions	
All Traffic		Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completion
Channels	<input type="checkbox"/> Default Channel Grouping	6,900 % of Total: 100.00% (6,900)	6,121 % of Total: 100.00% (6,121)	7,976 % of Total: 100.00% (7,976)	84.03% Avg for View: 84.03% (0.00%)	1.43 Avg for View: 1.43 (0.00%)	00:00:54 Avg for View: 00:00:54 (0.00%)	0.00% Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	0 (0.00%) % of Total: 0.00% (0)
Treemaps	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Organic Search	4,066 (58.44%)	3,516 (57.44%)	4,716 (59.13%)	87.11%	1.34	00:00:57	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Source/Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Direct	1,333 (19.16%)	1,223 (19.98%)	1,490 (18.68%)	67.45%	1.83	00:00:52	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Referrals	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Referral	1,194 (17.16%)	1,022 (16.70%)	1,399 (17.54%)	88.13%	1.37	00:00:58	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Google Ads	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Social	348 (5.00%)	345 (5.64%)	350 (4.39%)	98.00%	1.02	00:00:02	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Search Console	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. (Other)	16 (0.23%)	15 (0.25%)	21 (0.26%)	61.90%	1.76	00:01:02	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Social									
Campaigns									
Behavior									
Conversions									

Show rows: Go to:

This report was generated on 5/7/21 at 5:03:0

Source: Google Analytics

The second illustration confirms that the website's largest traffic part is indeed organic. Referral and social traffic together account for more than a fifth part. It is naturally built up with reposts and SEO managers'

implementation of the social media part of backlink building policy.

What confuses a bit is the second-largest *direct* traffic type because it also lacks clear definition. To explain it, direct visitors simply input the website address in their browser windows. The Russian website is lucky to have a short and easy-to-remember name. This counts high in website ranking, but apparently has nothing to do with backlinks.

A reason to rank higher

We've now seen that not every traffic type counts equally in ranking. Likewise, not even backlinks have equal weight in it, being one of the major traffic sources. Despite being a bit outdated, the PageRank algorithm still sees backlink portfolio as one of the most influencing factors of ranking, although Google, Yandex, and other search engines have long ago abandoned taking quantity of backlinks alone into consideration.

Highly valued backlinks are natural in a sense that they are logically built in the text at the referring website and are related to the page they lead to. Being natural implies absence of visitors' disappointment with where they've landed: it may be not exactly what they were after, but at least close.

What also matters is the reputation of referring websites. It is quite easy to purchase a whole pack of backlinks at new, even thematically related web pages. It is even possible to make them within a couple of hours with one of those free website construction kits. Alas, this just won't do because the reputation of what has just been created precisely for backlink placement is nil.

Generally, most reputable are academic websites. That's why scientific content created by competent managers who know the subject matter

greatly increases chances to enjoy the full effect of edu backlinks in a form of greatly increased ranking on Google and other search engines.

One goes with the other

Effective external SEO can hardly be imagined without a strategy. Inbound links will sooner or later come naturally, but this takes time. Like with on-site SEO, the external part of that job requires careful planning and sometimes investments. Those times are long gone when it was enough simply to throw links at one of the numerous “aggregator” web pages (where there were hundreds of links without anything in common). Quality now counts and determines ranking – thus, effectiveness of SEO itself – together with the number of backlinks.

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