



## Delivering The End Result

It isn't particularly easy to obtain high rankings for your website and generate sufficient web traffic and sales. Because of this, a number of unethical and illegal Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques were created to fool the search engines into giving sites high rankings. The term illegal can be used a few ways; there are a few techniques that are illegal in the sense that they are against the law, and others that are illegal in the eyes of Google and other major search engines. If you break Google's laws, they ban your site, which isn't a good thing.

If you are unaware of unethical and illegal SEO techniques, let this article serve as a beginner's course in unacceptable practices.

### **Link Farms**

Link farms are websites that exist for the sole purpose of linking to other websites. Also known as spamdexing, these types of websites are illegal to the major search engines like Google because it can unfairly help websites achieve high rankings without actually earning it through quality content.

### ***How to avoid it***

Ask your current or prospective SEO professional specifically how they will secure incoming links for you. If the SEO professional says that they will build you hundreds to thousands of webpages across different domains that will link to your website, it's best to not work with them because these practices will damage your site's rankings.

### **Keyword Stuffing**

This is one of the oldest illegal seo techniques around, and it involves overloading a page with keywords and phrases either in the metatags or other script tags. This is quite different from page optimization, as the same keyword could be repeated dozens of times in no particularly logical way to fool the search engines. Like other illegal practices, once the search engines catch you, your site will be banned or penalized in some way.

### ***How to avoid it***

You can determine whether your site has been stuffed with keywords by viewing the source code of your website. To do this, click the "View" button on the top of your browser, and select "Page Source" or "Source Code", depending on the browser you are using. If you see the same keywords and phrases repeated over and over again - your page has been keyword stuffed, and your site will eventually be banned for it. Talk with your webmaster, and have all of the repeated keywords removed.

### **Using trademarked keywords**

Using someone else's trademark in your domain name to get visitors to your website is illegal, and violates federal trademark law. Using trademarked keywords in meta tags, although not technically illegal, can also be dangerous. For example if a local printing company uses the word Kinkos in their search engine search tags they can be sued because they are not affiliated with Kinkos the printing company. Although it is not against the law, yet, companies have sued over it. It all depends on why and how you are using the tags. If the courts deem that you are using them

in a deceptive manner than you will probably lose the lawsuit. There have been cases that the defendant proved that they had a legitimate reason as to why they used the trademarked word in the meta tags.

#### ***How to avoid it***

The best way to avoid using trademarked keywords is to ask your SEO professional to provide you with a list of all keywords and phrases used in metatags and other script tags. It's relatively easy to spot keywords that may "raise a flag". You can check if a keyword is trademarked by checking the US Patent and Trademark Office's Trademark Electronic Search System ([TESS](#)).

#### **Hidden links and text**

Search engines work by scanning pages for certain keywords which are submitted into a search request and display results where the exact keyword appears typically, on a "page". Webmasters then insert some links or texts that are only readable by search engines but can not be seen by the human eye. You can, for instance put a white link or text with the appropriate keywords onto a certain web page with also a white background. Individuals can not detect it and will not even notice the difference; however "spiders" can read it and rank that site higher.

#### ***How to avoid it***

This is another situation where you just have to ask your webmaster if they are aware of any hidden keywords on any of the pages, and ask them if they could take a look to be on the safe side.

While it could be said that some of the illegal SEO techniques mentioned could be used in a company's website by accident, Google and the other search engines philosophy is "ignorance is no excuse". By being aware of illegal techniques such as indexing and keyword stuffing, you can be proactive in making decisions that affect your company's web presence and overall success using the internet to do business.