

Title: 7 SEO Tactics that Hurt Your Google Rankings

Meta description: Read this guide to learn which SEO tactics you should avoid if you want to rank high in Google's search results.

7 SEO Tactics that Hurt Your Google Rankings

Have you been reading about different ways to improve your search engine rankings? Not sure which SEO tactics are legitimate and which should be avoided?

Read this guide to learn which strategies you should steer clear of if you want to rank high in Google's search results.

1) Keyword stuffing

Keyword stuffing is the practice of filling your content with a large number of keywords with the intention of getting better rankings in search engine results.

In the past, businesses were able to improve their rankings through keyword stuffing because Google relied heavily on keywords and keyword density to determine the search engine results for any particular search query.

While keyword stuffing might have been effective to a certain extent years ago, it's a highly frowned upon tactic today. Nowadays, Google knows when you're using keyword stuffing to try to manipulate its algorithms, and will penalize you for it.

Google's example of keyword stuffing:

We sell *custom cigar humidors*. Our *custom cigar humidors* are handmade. If you're thinking of buying a *custom cigar humidor*, please contact our *custom cigar humidor* specialists at *custom.cigar.humidor@example.com*.

Source: seopressor.com

Apart from being manipulative, keyword stuffing also makes your content difficult to read and understand.

What you should do instead: Instead of focusing on keywords and keyword density, work on creating quality content that answers your customers' questions and helps them solve their pain points.

Focusing on quality content will help you win favors with both search engines and visitors, which, in the end, will result in more organic traffic and sales.

2) Over-optimizing anchor text

Anchor text is the clickable text that forms a link. It's one of the hundreds of different factors that Google takes into account when ranking webpages.

While using keyword-rich anchor text sparingly can help improve your rankings to a certain degree, overdoing it will cause more harm than good.

Google doesn't like anchor text over-optimization because it's manipulative and doesn't help to improve the user experience.

What you should do instead: Use anchor text naturally, and in a way that's helpful to your website visitors. Anchor text should help users understand what's behind a link, as well as fit seamlessly with the rest of the content.

3) Buying backlinks

Backlinks are one of the factors Google uses to determine the relevancy and authority of a page. For Google to be able to generate helpful search engine results, it needs to make sure that websites use backlinks naturally.

Buying backlinks is an artificial way of building backlinks to your website and doesn't help Google understand if your website is trustworthy, authoritative, and relevant enough for a particular search query.

The screenshot shows the Attracta website header with navigation links: Free SEO Training, Get a Link Blast, Managed SEO, About Us, and Login / Signup. The main content area features a dark blue background with a central diagram. The diagram consists of a central white circle labeled 'YOUR SITE' surrounded by six green circles, each labeled 'LINK'. Red arrows point from each 'LINK' circle towards the 'YOUR SITE' circle. To the right of the diagram, the text reads: 'Get a Link Blast! Would you like to attract more visitors to your website? Visitors who are specifically looking for your product or service? Then you need to increase your rankings in the search engine results. That's where Link Blast can help! Link Blast increases the number of relevant inbound links to your website, which is THE major ranking factor in search results. Increasing inbound links shows the search engines that your website is an authority and should be ranked appropriately.' Below this text is a red button with the text 'Order Now - \$59.95'.

Source: attracta.com

Paying other websites to link to yours is a violation of [Google's Webmaster Guidelines](#). If Google discovers that your website has been involved in buying or selling backlinks, it will penalize you heavily.

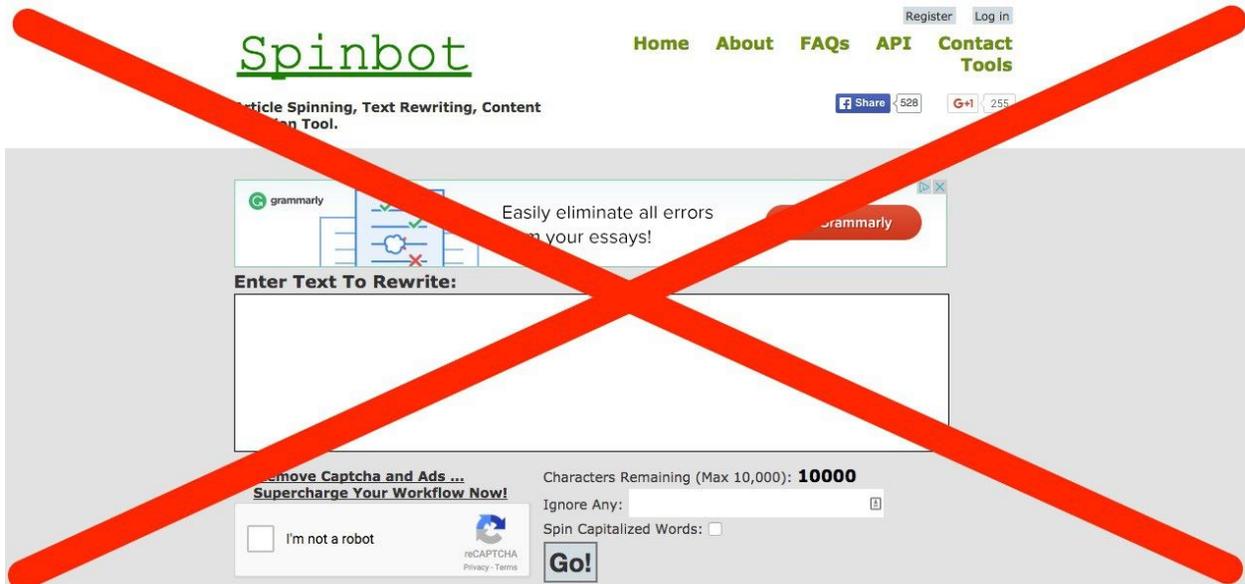
What you should do instead: Focus on legitimate ways of building backlinks, such as creating link-worthy content and writing guest posts.

4) Content spinning

Content spinning is the practice of using specialized software to rewrite content automatically by replacing each word or phrase with one of its synonyms. It results in articles and blog posts that sound robotic and unnatural.

In the past, marketers used content spinning to produce more content for their marketing campaigns quickly and easily.

The issue with spun content is that it doesn't provide anything valuable to visitors; it simply rehashes previously published information.



Source: *spinbot.com*

Since Google focuses on finding high-quality content that solves the searcher's query, spun content is very unlikely to rank high in Google's search results.

What to do instead: Google values quality over quantity. Work on creating excellent, highly-researched content manually, even if it means you only publish a single blog post every month.

5) Using hidden text

A decade ago, when Google wasn't as advanced as it is today, some webmasters used hidden text (usually keywords) on their websites in an effort to rank higher in search engine results.

They filled pages and pages of their website with keywords and then hid the keywords through a variety of different methods (e.g., using the same color for the text and website background, setting the font size to zero, etc.)

For a while, this helped them rank for many high and low volume search phrases. However, Google quickly caught on and penalized these websites.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<body>
```

By turning this text white, the overuse of keywords is hidden.

```
<p><font color="white">web hosting</font></p>
<p><font color="white">best hosting plans</font></p>
<p><font color="white">hosting plans</font></p>
<p><font color="white">hosting plan provider</font></p>
```

```
</body>
</html>
```

Source: savvii.com

While there are some legitimate uses for hidden text (e.g., for accessibility purposes), it should generally be avoided.

What you should do instead: Create high-quality content and focus on providing information that's helpful to your visitors. If you do this on a consistent basis, your search engine rankings will surely improve.

6) Participating in link exchanges

A link exchange involves two or more websites linking to each other in an effort to improve their search engine rankings.

It's an unnatural way of building links which, in most cases, results in websites gaining irrelevant or low-quality backlinks.

You should avoid participating in link exchanges because it will most likely decrease the quality of your backlink profile and reduce the chances of your content ranking high in search engine results.

What you should do instead: Avoid link exchange schemes and focus on building links with legitimate methods such as guest posting.

7) Cloaking

Cloaking involves setting up a webpage so that it's displayed differently to search engines and visitors. An example of cloaking includes showing search engines an HTML page while serving users a page filled with images.

Cloaking is a misleading and manipulative practice that's heavily frowned upon by Google. Engaging in cloaking can result in Google penalizing your website severely or even deindexing it completely.

What you should do instead: Stop trying to manipulate search engines and focus on creating high-quality content that helps satisfy your visitors' needs.

Stop using manipulative and deceitful SEO tactics

Google is getting smarter and smarter every day. Stop trying to fool it by using shady SEO tactics such as keyword stuffing, anchor text over-optimization, buying backlinks, content spinning, hidden text, link exchanges, and cloaking.

Instead, focus on creating high-quality content that provides value to your prospects and customers and helps them solve their problems. Do this on a regular basis, and Google will reward you with high search engine rankings.