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At its heart, off-page optimization in SEO is about building backlinks to your website and this practice is also known as link building. We [do this because the higher quality backlinks](#) you have from relevant websites, the more reputable your website is seen in your industry by search engines.

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[This is often the part that SEOs](#) find tricky at first but with persistence and researching your competitors, it's one of the ways to really significantly improve your SEO progress. You may not be able to directly control how external websites link to your site but you can influence them by creating great content and/or contacting them.

Off-page optimization requires some upfront work but is a more ongoing and never-ending activity. If you are at the top of your industry and stop acquiring backlinks, you may find that your competitors continue to build them and overtake you.

Open Site Explorer, Majestic SEO and Ahrefs are SEO tools that help when analysing both your own backlinks and competitors. They all offer a freemium model, which means you can get a free account and use some of the

functionality for free.



- A backlink is an incoming hyperlink from one web page to another website
- One of your key goals as an SEO is to increase the number backlinks to your site
- The text within the backlink is called anchor text and some relevancy through the text is passed
- A credible page with valuable content can earn dozens, hundreds and even thousands of backlinks

Not all backlinks are created evenly. Some will pass more ranking powers than others, which we will look

Search engines, especially Google, are getting very good at detecting whether a backlink [should add to your website's reputation](#) or not. Here are three keys to look out for:

- **Topical backlinks** that are relevant to your industry and are likely to bring in relevant referral traffic. So not only will you get an SEO boost but you'll also get some great referral traffic.
- **High authority** and reputable websites will pass high levels of reputation and we'll soon discover how you can measure authority.
- **Authentic backlinks** are earned on merit, rather than fake backlinks built purely for SEO. Search engines don't like to be tricked and target sites building phony links with a search engine penalty.

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## PageRank

“PageRank (PR) is an algorithm used by Google Search to rank websites in their search engine results. PageRank was named after Larry Page, one of the founders of Google. PageRank is a way of measuring the importance of website pages.

According to Google, PageRank works by counting the number and quality of links to a page to determine a rough estimate of how important the website is. The underlying assumption is that more important websites are likely to receive more links from other websites. It is not the only algorithm used by Google to order search engine results, but it is the first algorithm that was used by the company, and it is the best-known.”

How to measure the PageRank of a URL:

Moz and Ahrefs are popular SEO tool providers who supply metrics that mimic how PageRank may be calculated and estimates a value of how reputable a page and domain is.

Moz's Open Site Explorer offers:

- **Page Authority (PA)** is a score developed by Moz that predicts how well a specific page will rank on search engine result pages (SERP). Page Authority scores range from one to 100, with higher scores corresponding to a greater ability to rank.
- **Domain Authority (DA)** is a search engine ranking score developed by Moz that predicts how well a website will rank on search engine result pages (SERPs). A Domain Authority score ranges from one to 100, with higher scores corresponding to a greater ability to rank.

Ahref offers:

- **URL Rating (UR)** measures the strength of a target URL's backlink profile and the likelihood that the URL will rank high in Google. UR is measured on a logarithmic scale from 1 to 100, with the latter being the strongest.
- **Domain Rating (DR)** shows the strength of a given website's overall backlink profile.

DR is measured on a logarithmic scale from 1 to 100, with the latter being the strongest.

Social media links, e.g. from Facebook and Twitter, are sometimes known as social signals and there is a debate in whether they act like regular backlinks or whether they help with SEO at all.

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At the moment the general consensus is that they don't act like regular backlinks and do not pass reputation directly. This may be because it's hard for search engines to detect a strong enough signal in all the social media noise although that's not to say this stance may change in the future. Also, many of the social media links contain "nofollow" attributes which mean PageRank isn't passed.

However, social media often helps SEO in an indirect way and can play an important role. The more followers you have on social media, the more "eyeballs" will see the content that you post.

Some of these people may have websites and may decide to link to your websites, so you can earn regular backlinks through social media. Others may decide to re-share your content, which in turn gets more publicity and increases the chance of receiving further backlinks.

Open Site Explorer is a tool provided by Moz and allows you to research where a website has got its backlinks from. This may be the site you look after, a competitor or any other site that you wish to research.

The backlinks are ordered by Page Authority, so according to Moz, you should get the most important ones first.

Open Site Explorer is great for beginner to intermediate backlink analysis. Ahrefs and Majestic SEO are better for more experienced SEOs because they have a larger and more thorough index of backlinks. Bear in mind, although very useful, these tools are likely to be a simplified version of what Google sees and uses.

We're now going to do a mini SEO technical audit. It involves having a website in mind, copying the homepage's URL and also finding a relatively new webpage e.g. a recent blog post page.

This will help to make sure search engines can see your content, have chosen to index it and that the pages are considered search engine friendly.

The quickest way to check if a URL has been indexed is by checking if the current version of it is stored in a search engine.

In Google, you do this by:

- Entering "cache:" plus the URL you wish to check in the address bar or in a Google search
- It's important to not include any spaces, e.g.  
cache:https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com

Check if both URLs have been indexed using the cache command:

- This includes the homepage URL and a newly created page's URL
- Make a note of the time and date each was indexed

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If you get a 404 page not found, this is a sign the page has not been indexed yet.

If your page has not been indexed, make sure it is linked from other pages on your website and you can submit it to Google using “Fetch as Google” in Google Search Console.

Using the Google Mobile-Friendly Test, enter both URLs you wish to test to see if they are acceptable for mobile. Hopefully, your webpages will pass the first time. If not, review the issues of what hasn’t passed. Issues could include the text being too small, slow page load speed, or resources being blocked by Google. If you are not very technical and have not passed the test, you may need to run this past your web developer

Using the free Pingdom website speed test, enter both URLs and select the closest test location to where the website is based. Check to see if the web pages load in under two seconds. If it doesn’t scroll down to find out issues of what is holding the website back.

### **Action Point**

**PS:** I know you might agree with some of the points that I have raised in this article. You might not agree with some of the issues raised. Let me know your

views about the topic discussed. We will appreciate it if you could drop your comment. Thanks in anticipation.

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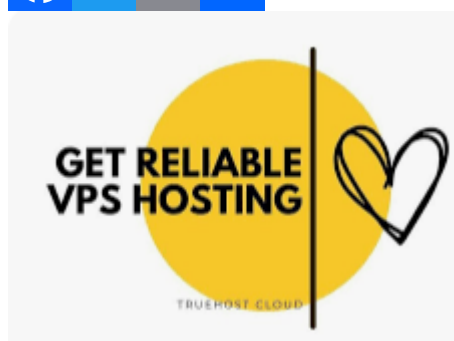
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