



Backlink Building Blocks

Report, August 2015

Introduction

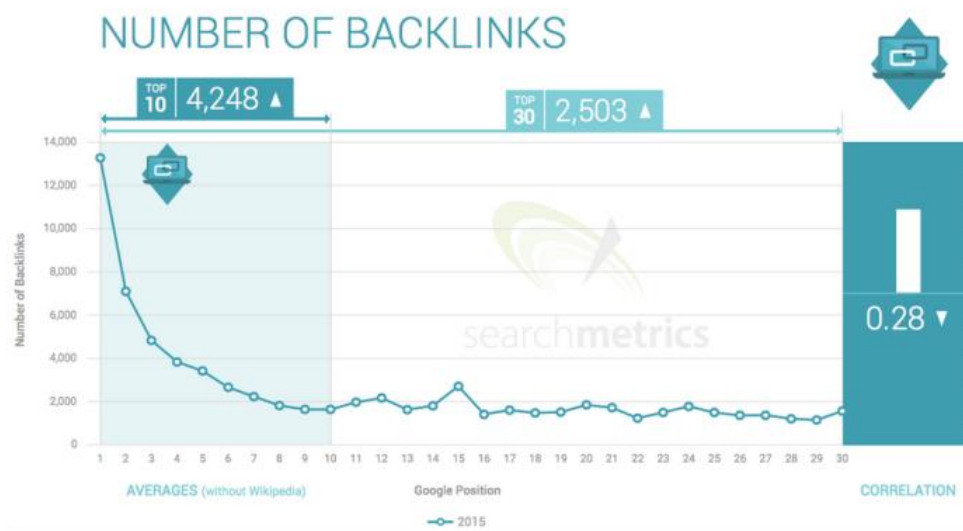
Being the cornerstone of many websites, using inbound links, or more commonly known as backlinks, are renowned for building authority to websites. Initially this was the only surefire way of attaining any trust and traffic to your website, however recently the shift has moved to producing the highest quality content to appease to search engines, especially Google.



The main changes happening to Google are the introduction of the disavow tool and the introduction of smartphones. The disavow tool means that you're now unable to determine what links to a page are still measured by Google, as well as also working to rid your website of low-quality links. Smartphones now make it easier than ever to share links amongst friends whilst on the move instead of manually sharing them online.

Now that those different methods of authority hunting are coming into the SEO fold, we've compiled a backlink report to investigate where backlinks are in 2015 and what can be predicted for the future of backlink building.

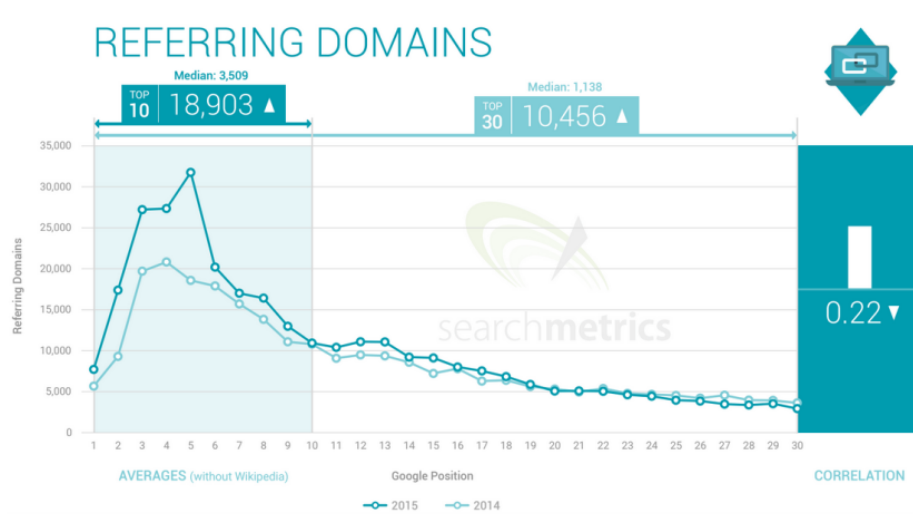
Backlink numbers



With almost 14,000 backlinks attained there are still high numbers to contend with, proving that ranking using backlinks is still the best method to gaining authority fast. Pages that reach the first 3 pages of Google have increased their link building

output in recent months because of the changes happening to the way we share stories.

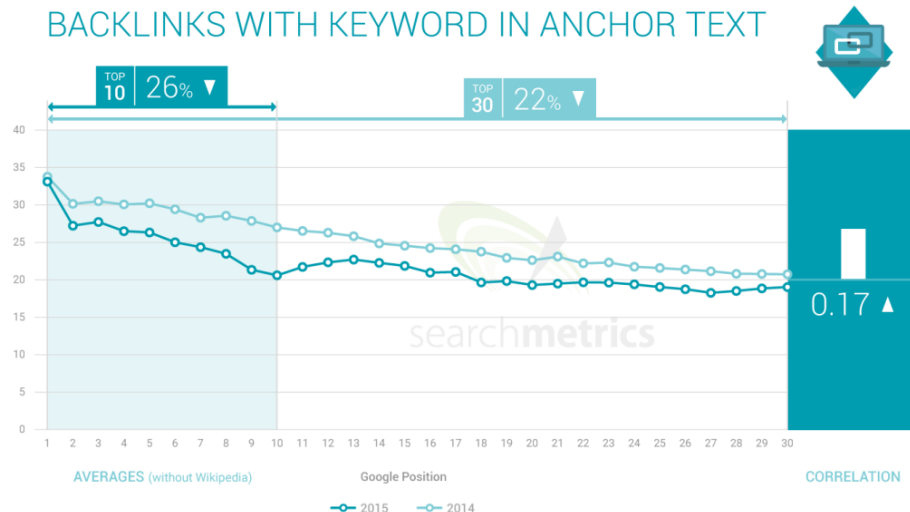
Referring Domains



Referring domains to homepages have also increased since the previous year, implying the impact that new technology methods have brought to a whole host of companies. As big brands and companies compete for online dominance on search engine results the number of

referring domains has thus increased.

Anchor Text



As Penguin 3.0 was implemented it sought to track down any cases of links being built unnaturally which brought a lot of penalties for websites. The use of a keyword as anchor text has continually declined year on year; 26% of backlinks still use keywords as anchor text compared to 2014 when it was 29%.

Nowadays, backlinks are replaced with the domain name instead of using a keyword to be linked to through anchor text. Why is this? Because brand names that are being linked tend to be much more accepting and natural compared to keyword linkage; this has been seen as recently as this year where the percentage of backlinks with anchor text containing a domain name has increased to over 10%.

While the majority of backlinks have now changed to have the domain name in the anchor text this doesn't apply to backlinks that link to the domain, which has remained unchanged in the past year.

Authority Sites

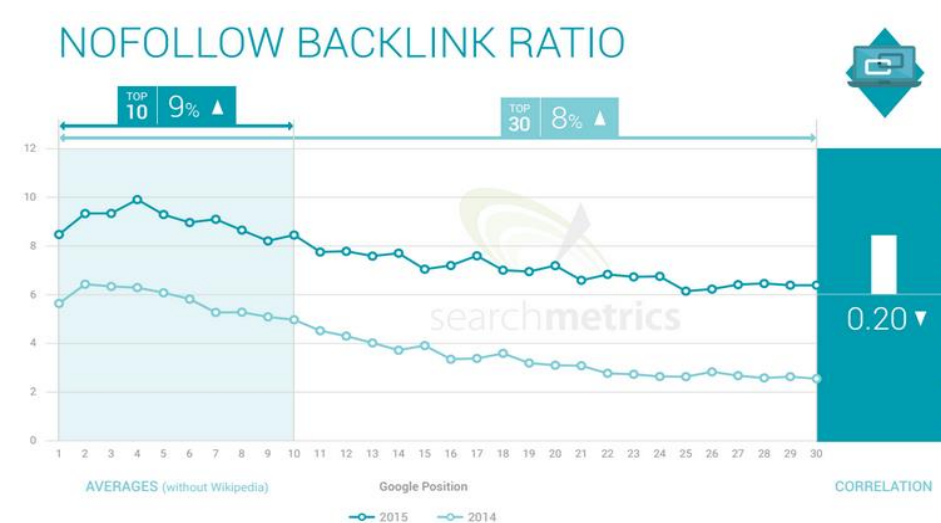


There are now 522 backlinks on average every year from news sites compared with last year being 333 backlinks, an almost 200 backlink jump. News sites have some of the highest authority on the internet and being able to be linked to it brings authority to a new high; these results suggest the importance high quality backlinks have compared to having as many backlinks as humanly possible.

Backlink Age

Now higher authority sites are replacing the lower quality links that heavily populated websites the age of backlinks varies. The age can now be from a year to a year and a half old as the quality is exponentially higher than before and these links can still retain their authority. URLs that land on the first 4 search terms of Google tend to have older links now than the previous year, with much higher authority links being used.

Nofollow Backlinks



Nofollow backlinks increased tremendously this year compared to 2014, up 3% from last year now up at 9%. Now that the increase of nofollow links have grown tremendously over the past year it's showing the higher level of quality each post has to be in order to rank highly online, meaning

Google has begun to watch over content that's published now more than ever.

Conclusions

Backlinks are still essential to high rankings and are very important to search engine optimisation. The introduction of the disavow tool has made it impossible to ascertain what Google collects in terms of links to a page. However, this allows websites to avoid the harsh penalties Google implements on websites that have purchased unresolvable links; backlinks in modern SEO are now much more about quality than quantity. Anchor text is still being readily used online though a decrease in anchor text use has happened year on year. The use of a domain name in the text is now favoured over the use of a keyword in the anchor text which

has brought more authority to websites, and thus meant that aged sources are more acceptable to use on websites. Furthermore, nofollow links are on the rise, making content higher quality with references from other sites and boosting authority on a number of websites at once.

In short, it seems very likely that in the future the way backlinks are gained will be changing, so much so that the traditional ways of creating inbound links will be soon changed in favour of newer, easier and innovative methods. The quality of links is thus improving for the better with a huge increase in quality, high-authority backlinks and content, which begs the question as to what the future holds for all areas of search engine optimization.