

# Site Search Engine Ranking Dropped

Search engine traffic is one of the most valuable and targeted sources of traffic because people generally trust web pages which garner one of the top spots in their search engine of choice. It takes a lot of time in link building and building your social search reputation on social networks.

If your search engine traffic disappears overnight, then without being properly diversified in the kinds of traffic you tap, you can find yourself up the creek with no paddle.

## **The Google Honeymoon Ended**

If you have a relatively new site which is only a few months old and you found that you were enjoying cushy rankings for much of that time until now, it's most likely the result of the Google Honeymoon. This is the term for the phenomenon where a new site enjoys high rankings for a short period of time before falling to its more realistic ranking.

## **Google Sandbox Effect Started**

The "Google Sandbox Effect" refers to the effect where new sites get dropped in the sandbox shortly after being created. You may enjoy those nice rankings due to the honeymoon or another phenomenon temporarily, but afterwards you are dropped in the sandbox which is like a punishment for new sites just for being new and unproven. In this case you should stick to low competition keywords, creating great content, and looking for high authority incoming links to prove your value to Google to get you out of the sandbox sooner than later.

## **Algorithm Updates/Link Juice Lost**

Probably the most common reason your site disappeared is due to a change in the search engine's algorithms. Search engines are constantly updating their algorithms which dictate where pages rank for keywords in the search engine results pages in order to keep things fresh and ensure that the best content is kept at the top. Even if your site isn't being directly affected by an algorithm update, sites which you get a lot of your links from could be which can diminish the amount of link juice which you have overnight, so your ranking will likely drop with it.

Most recently the Google farmer update, also known as the Panda Update, slapped the influence which content farm sites (sites with huge amounts of sub par content with an emphasis on quantity over quality) had in the search engines, so content farms as well as the millions of websites receiving link juice from them were seriously affected practically overnight.

## **Malware**

If your site is the victim of malware and Google detects malware on any of your pages, it will notify and warn any potential visitors in the SERPs who click on your page before they actually get to your site. Very few people will proceed after seeing such a warning (would you?), so this can account for a HUGE drop in traffic and can dissuade not just the casual internet user but other webmasters who would potentially link to you or even those who have already linked to you to break those links. This obviously can have an adverse effect not only on your traffic but your rankings in a relatively short period of time.

## **Server Issues**

If Google cannot access your server because of issues with your host or on your end, this can cause a problem if left unfixed after a period of a few days.

## **Robot.txt File Problems**

Make sure you don't have any bonehead mistakes in your robot.txt which may be prohibiting search engine crawlers from gaining access to certain pages of your site. If that happens all of a sudden, you can find your ranking drop, so make sure you're only blocking the URLs you don't want crawled with that file.

## **Penalization**

Your site could have been penalized without your even realizing it if you broke Google's rules.

Steer clear of black hat SEO techniques to ensure that you are not penalized.

### **Broken Links**

Broken links can cause serious problems, especially if it's a prominent internal link on your site. It can be time consuming/impossible to check each of your links manually, so I use a free plugin with WordPress called Broken Link Checker which gives you a heads up as soon as it detects a broken link on one of its regular checks.

### **Duplicate Content**

Search engines like Google hate duplicate content. This is especially true when it happens on the same site, but it can be an issue on different websites, as well. Not only does this irk Google, but when it finds duplicate content in two or more locations online, Google has to determine which is the true original content, and it may not always be your site that gets the credit, regardless of whether you put that content on your site first or not; so this can have adverse effects on your rankings in a couple of ways.

Try a free search on CopyScape to see if your content has been copied without your permission.

### **The Google Dance**

The Google Dance refers to the phenomenon of pages randomly jumping around different spots in the SERPs, sometimes drastically. Of all these reasons, this one is the least able to be explained clearly and rationally. Typically, if the Google dance is the culprit for your rankings drop, the good news is that you'll regain your higher rankings shortly. It's just a random shuffling and fluctuation of listings which usually doesn't last long. - *Paul M. Ventura*

