

Nofollow to Limit Blog and Comment Spam

By Jim Hedger, StepForth News Editor, StepForth Placement Inc.

Over the past year, Blogs have been used to manipulate search engine rankings in a very big way. Couple the immense power of link-distribution inherent in the Blogosphere with Google's way of ranking websites based on the number and relevancy of incoming links and add a number of SEOs with overactive imaginations - the result is a spamming machine of mythic proportions.

Remember the SEO competitions of last year with the nonsense phrase: "Nigritude Ultramarine"? Well, if you don't, suffice it to say it was a contest to see who could get and keep #1 placement under a phrase that was at the time, totally fresh as it wasn't a real phrase to begin with. The results proved the power of Blogs and link-densities. Now Google, Yahoo, MSN and others have joined together to support a new link-attribute that stops spiders from following specified links.

The new attribute is called "nofollow" and is designed to be placed within an anchor tag.

For instance, the link: [a href="http://www.stepforth.com/"]Search Engine Placement[/a] will allow a spider to follow the link to the StepForth homepage.

A similar link, [a href="http://www.stepforth.com/" rel="nofollow"]Search Engine Placement[/a] will NOT allow the spider to follow. The attribute can also be placed in front of the URL in the href string.

Google says it will not count links with the nofollow attribute in PageRank scores and will not count the anchor text in terms of relevancy to the page linked to. This should effectively remove the benefits of link-spamming in forums and blogs. Even so, the overactive imaginations found under dark-hats in the sector are already working on work-arounds. It will be interesting to see how this new tag works out.