

## Ross Dunn Answers SEO Questions

By Ross Dunn, CEO, [StepForth Search Engine Placement Inc.](#)

The following are questions sent in by readers of the StepForth Weekly [SEO Newsletter](#) and [The SEO Blog](#). If you have a question you would like to submit please [email me](#).

### 1. Question: Does a domain name play a part in SEO?

From: anonymous

**Ross:** Yes it can help but only marginally. If your domain name includes the primary keyphrase that you want rankings for it will help boost the perceived relevance of your website. I generally consider keywords in a domain to be a 1-5% advantage in the rankings war. The simple fact is that before keyword domains really help rankings your site must be well optimized. Theoretically if you were head to head with your competitor and both sites were equal in optimization and online popularity but only site #2 had keywords in their domain they would get a better ranking.

In short, domains play a role in rankings under only the most competitive of terms where every percentage of advantage is a welcome edge.

### 2. Question: How important are unique IP's?

From: Paul C.

We have various travel sites, each with unique IP but as they are hosted in the same place they have the same C block. We are thinking of switching hosting company, due to excess downtime recently, and wonder whether it is worth looking again for unique IP's. Or whether from an SEO viewpoint a shared IP is OK.

**Ross:** Great question but a tough one because a lot of what I know about the negative affects of shared IP's is circumstantial because it is so difficult to prove that such penalties exist. If you want to be extremely cautious then unique IP's are a safe way to go because you do not have to worry about sharing an IP with a potential spammer. In my experience, however, a shared IP is no problem at all unless your sites are using duplicate content or are grossly interlinked with each other.

As an after thought I would like to note that if you broke your travel sites into subdomains then you would not have to worry about this issue because all of your sites would have to use the same IP. For example your main site might be [www.theworld.com](#) and your subdomains could be [france.theworld.com](#), [italy.theworld.com](#), [canada.theworld.com](#), etc. This is a very effective method of separating a large site into smaller, more manageable sites and I highly recommend it.

### 3. Question: How to remove blacklisting by Yahoo?

From: Paul C.

Our websites are linked to each other, as most cover different destinations in Latin America. For more than a year we lost all our Yahoo positions, although retain reasonable Google positions. When we contacted Yahoo, they confirmed we had been blacklisted and sent a standard email

indicating the range of sins we could be engaged in (cloaking, link farm, invisible text, keyword spamming etc). Of these, the only one we do use is the linking to our various related sites. There is strong commercial logic for this and we don't think this should be a case for blacklisting. But how to change Yahoo's mind? Try Express submission? Set up a new site on a completely different server and without links? Or some other way?

**Ross:** Unfortunately changing a search engine company's mind is a pointless task left up to those with a lot of time and money on their hands. There is, however, a page within Yahoo that might provide you with a means to contact Yahoo and have them [review the status of your URL](#). I don't honestly know how much this will help but may give you a venue to ask a question or make your case.

In cases where we have had to fix the past errors of new clients that resulted in blacklisting all that it took was to remove the offending content and wait for re-indexing or resubmit the site. In this line of thinking I would recommend toning down the interlinking between your websites and resubmitting them to Yahoo. It is possible that you only 'just' triggered the blacklist alert at Yahoo and that this will bring you below the alert threshold.

#### **A Final Thought**

Search engines rarely penalize for no plausible reason. Before you take further steps I strongly recommend having a qualified SEO review your website for offending code. It is always possible that you are missing something offensive that could be easily remedied and get you back into the best of both worlds; top rankings in Google and Yahoo.