Pro Tip: 3 common mistakes SEOs make when disavowing links

Disavowing links can be tricky business – and there's lots of misinformation on the topic.

There are some common areas where a lot of people go wrong in the process of disavowing links. Some of these misconceptions can have detrimental impacts on your website's visibility.

Here are three misconceptions about disavowing links you will want to avoid.

1. Disavowing the wrong links

It might seem logical to focus your efforts on disavowing links that are obviously bad, including:

- Adult sites
- Illegal gambling
- Sketchy foreign sites

Google is very good at deciphering bad inbound links – they're going to know that you didn't actively build links on porn sites.

The ones you should focus on disavowing are ones you wouldn't want to show Google – like irrelevant, blatant attempts to build links. Take a critical look at every inbound link you have. Be sure that **it adds contextual value to the content it lives on**.

The common types of links you should focus on disavowing are:

- Link schemes – it's obvious the link is for ranking or making money

- Non-editorial, spammy links
- Links with promotional anchor texts

If it’s obvious that the link is only there for the purpose of link building, it could get you into trouble.

2. Disavowing unnecessarily

Many tend to jump to rash conclusions after being negatively impacted by an update. **Disavowing links should be a last resort.**

Disavowing links without strong, individual rationales oftentimes results in detoxing links that are actually helping your website rank.

Before you make any decisions, examine each link and take the time to consider all the risks and benefits of disavowing each link.

3. Relying too much on tools

Link analysis tools can oftentimes be misleading. These generate lists of potential disavow candidates programmatically – and aren’t always 100% accurate.

SEOs should not listen to these tools blindly. According to John Mueller – “If a tool can tell you which links to disavow, Google is probably ignoring them anyway.”

Automated tools shouldn’t be your compass in disavowing links. Examine each link critically to decide its contextual value.

Pro Tip is a special feature for SEOs in our community to share a specific tactic others can use to elevate their performance. You can submit your own here.

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