Tips to qualify link building prospects in minutes



Link builders know that qualifying prospects is extremely time-consuming, and a tool that helps you find the relevant prospects fast is gold. This guide will show you a simple method to obtain a list of relevant prospects in several minutes rather than days, or weeks of manual work.

You either have time, either money, usually, or maybe you are short of both of them, which is a very challenging situation, yet not hopeless. However, these two resources, money and time are related and one way to increase your profit is to actually make many things in less time. The faster you solve problems, the more clients you can help, the more customers you get, well basically, you make more money. This is why doing things by hand is not an option if you consider SEO more than just a hobby; you simply waste too much time this way. So you will have to use some tools, and two very powerful pieces of software for getting and processing large amounts of data are Screaming Frog and Microsoft Excel.

If you are a freelancer or a small SEO agency you should know that Screaming Frog is not a cheap solution. The software itself is not very expensive (not expensive at all, actually), but to use it at its full potential – parsing huge websites, or lists of URLs requires quite a powerful PC configuration. However, you can eat an elephant one bite at a time, as they say, so here is a guide that helps you know “How to crawl

large websites using the Screaming Frog SEO Spider“. A free alternative is Xenu’s Link Sleuth, but this cute little program is getting older, and older as it hasn’t been updated for almost a decade. However, Xenu is free and fast. As for Excel, some quite decent free alternatives are Google Sheets and Open Office.

Handling Excel sheets with hundred of rows also requires a powerful PC. A computer with a generous amount of memory, and a vigorous processor that’ll allow you to run Screaming Frog properly and also sort and filter huge amounts of data in Excel. So, if you plan to take your SEO business serious, you will have to spend some money to save time, but it is going to be a great investment in the long run. In case you want to have a PC well configured for Screaming Frog, here is the recommended hardware for it.

Whitepaper

Anyway, let’s get back to our main topic – “**How to qualify link building prospects fast?**”

1. Searching for relevant websites

First things first, in order to get what you want, you actually have to know what you need. So what are you looking for?

Let’s say we want to start a “broken links” type link building campaign for a website about aircraft modeling. In this case, we will try to find some relevant pages from relevant websites.

But what does “relevant” mean actually? Well, for you it means that the ideal prospects should be websites containing pages with:

- The “links” or “resources” terms in the URL, and

- The “aircraft modeling” related keywords in the title tag, in the body, and/or inside the anchors – basic on-page SEO, actually.

Tip

The links page are not only good link building opportunities, but also gates to even more relevant prospects. Those external links with relevant keywords in their anchors could take you to even more relevant prospects.

Now that we know what we want, it is time to search for those ideal websites. We could do that in a couple of ways:

- Just search for “aircraft modeling”, you will get quantity, but not the best relevance (a large list containing many websites including a lot of not so relevant results too).

If we want some more relevant results we should narrow a bit the search using the advanced operators as follows:

- *aircraft modelling* **inurl:***htm* – To get websites containing the term “links.htm” in the URLs.
- *aircraft modelling* **intitle:***”aircraft modelling”*– To get websites containing your keywords in the title tags
- *aircraft modelling* **intext:***”aircraft modelling”*– To get websites containing your keywords somewhere in the body.

Another somewhat useful search operator was inanchor: which is used to search for websites containing certain keywords in their anchors. Unfortunately, Google abandoned this operator a few years ago, but we are going to use Screaming Frog to extract those anchors.

Personally, I usually use the first variant, that offers me those links pages from relevant websites, and do the rest of filtering with Screaming Frog and Excel, as you will see below. However, feel free to experiment.

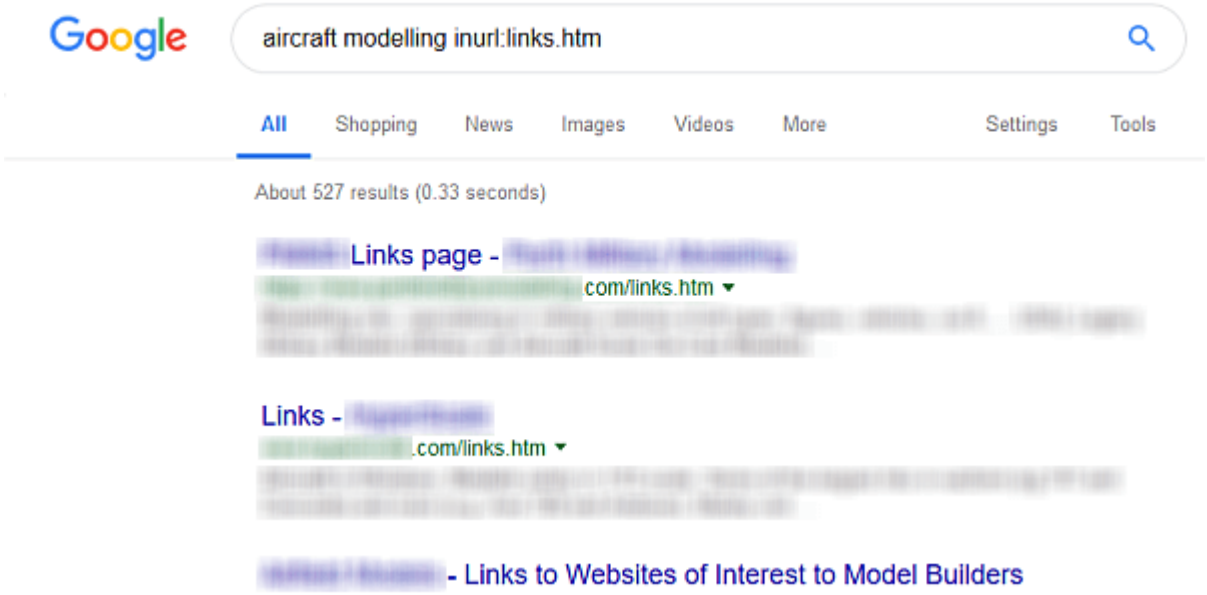
2. Getting the links pages

Well, there are some quite good paid services and programs for scraping results from the search engines, but I'll show you a couple of free solutions to that:

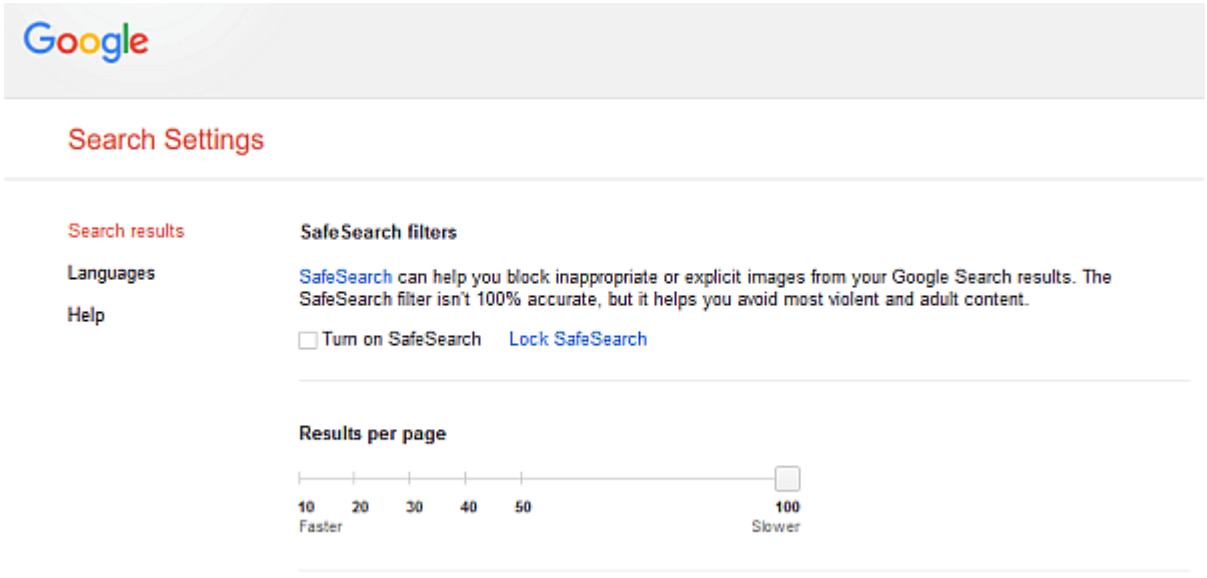
- Link Grabber, a free Chrome extension
- Google Results Bookmarklet, also free, working on both Mozilla Firefox and Chrome

The scraping process is simple. You just need to follow the steps mentioned below:

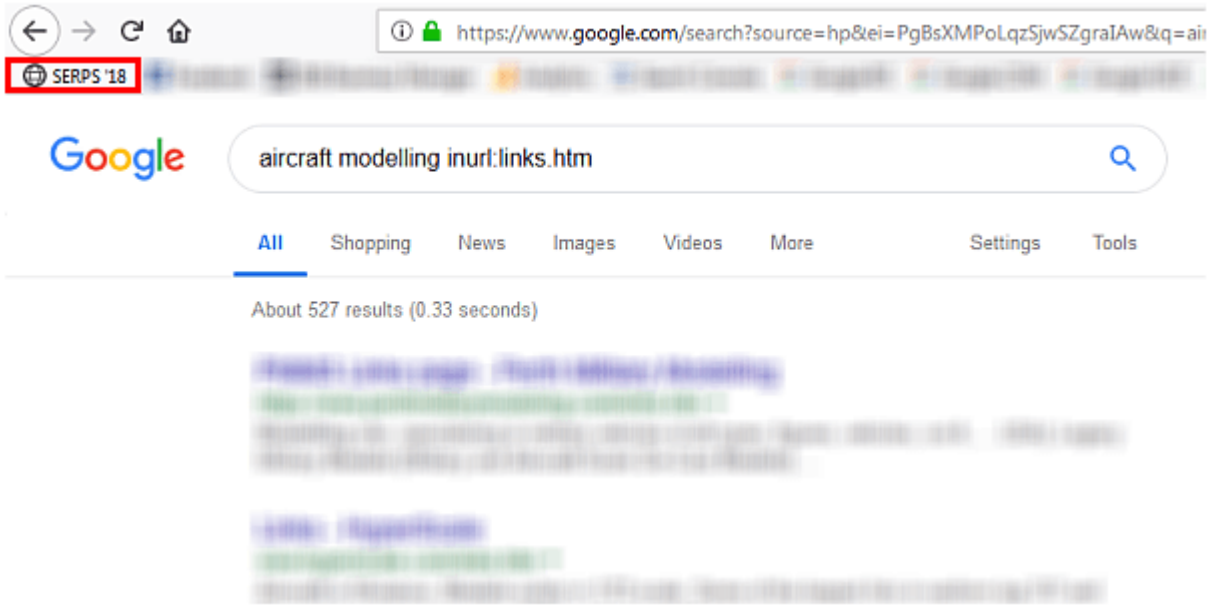
1. Install Google Results Bookmarklet (drag that green button from this page to your bookmarks toolbar)
2. Enter the preferred keywords in Google



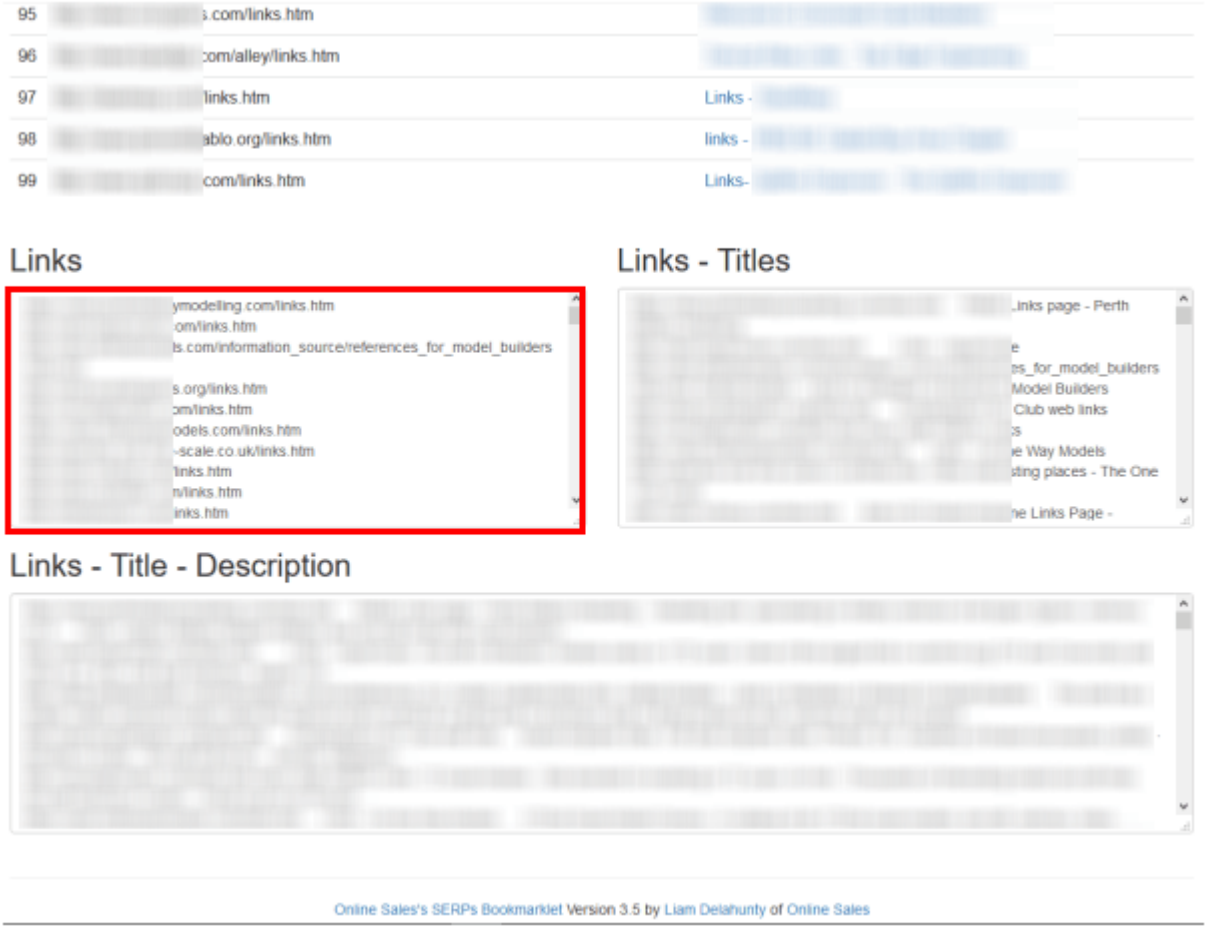
3. Go to "Settings", and set Google to display 100 results



4. Push the button “SERPS’18” from your toolbar and a new page will open



5. You will see the URLs at the bottom of the resulting page. It’ll look something like this:

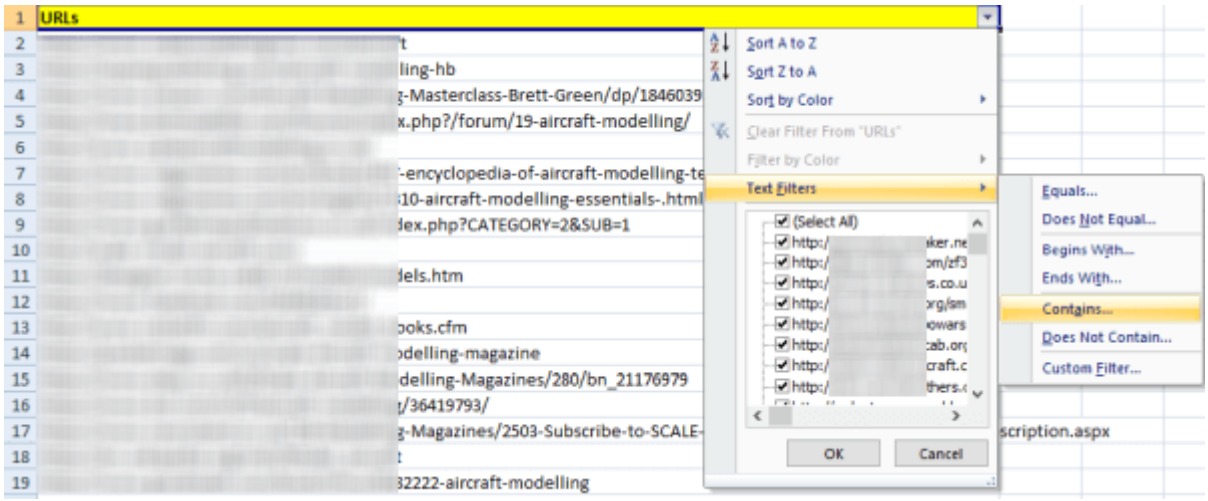


6. Do the same for the next pages and copy/paste the URLs in an Excel file

	A
1	URLs
2	arymodelling.com/links.htm
3	.com/links.htm
4	dels.com/information_source/references_for_model_builders/links.htm
5	ers.org/links.htm
6	om/links.htm
7	models.com/links.htm
8	ue-scale.co.uk/links.htm
9	n/links.htm
10	om/links.htm
11	/links.htm
12	s.com/links.htm
13	m/links.htm
14	models.com/links.htm
15	urk.com/links.htm
16	ls.com/html/links.htm
17	org/scottmetze/rc/rc_links/links.htm

7. Use the filter to see only the pages containing “links/resources” in their URLs. This is something you can skip if your search contained inurl:links.htm, as

Google probably has already done this filtering for you.



Tip

You can filter out URLs that are not containing a certain extension, this is very useful when you target a particular country (such as .uk, .ca, .au, and any other country-based domains).

That’s it. In about a couple of minutes, you have managed to create a list of some hundreds of links pages from possible relevant websites. This is the point where the hard work of qualifying prospects usually begins, only that this time Screaming Frog will do this for you.

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1. Set the “List” mode in Screaming Frog

2. In Configuration/Spider/Limits set the Crawl Depth to “zero” – you want Screaming Frog to read and extract data from that list only, not to crawl the URLs.

3. Paste the URLs in Screaming Frog and hit “Start”.

Tip

Optionally, you can enter some relevant keywords in the Custom/Search fields. This will display the pages containing those keywords (something like intext:keywords).

4. When Screaming Frog hits 100%, export “All Outlinks”, and you will see all the links, both internal and external, (this is that *inanchor:*operator I have mentioned above), along with their anchors and the “Source” pages.

Tip

If you want to select only the external links, simply bulk export the external links.

5. Import the list in Excel. Now, you will use the Advanced Filters in Excel. **Note:** If you want to learn more about using filters, this Microsoft guide could be helpful.

The process of sorting is not that complicated. You just need to enter the criteria of sorting above the URLs. These criteria will contain the relevant keywords to your website (something like =**model aircraft***).

The logic behind this is that the links with relevant keywords in their anchors are signs of both relevance to your website and interest in your website.

- Relevant pages usually have links with keywords in their anchors pointing to relevant websites.

- If a website has already linked to a site similar to yours, it should be interested in your site too.

6. Select the anchors to be filtered

7. Select the criteria

Hit “OK” and voilà!

Now you have a list full of probably up to 90% relevant prospects. Just get rid of the duplicate URLs, and you are ready to do some outreach.

Conclusion

There is a great variety of software these days that allow you to crunch huge volumes of data. So a possible shortage is in no case related to the number or complexity of the tools available, but rather to our ability to make the right choices and learn how to get the most out of them.

This is why you should be proud of yourself now, after reading this guide, you have just learned not only how to better use your time, but also several new things you can do with these

two powerful pieces of software.

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