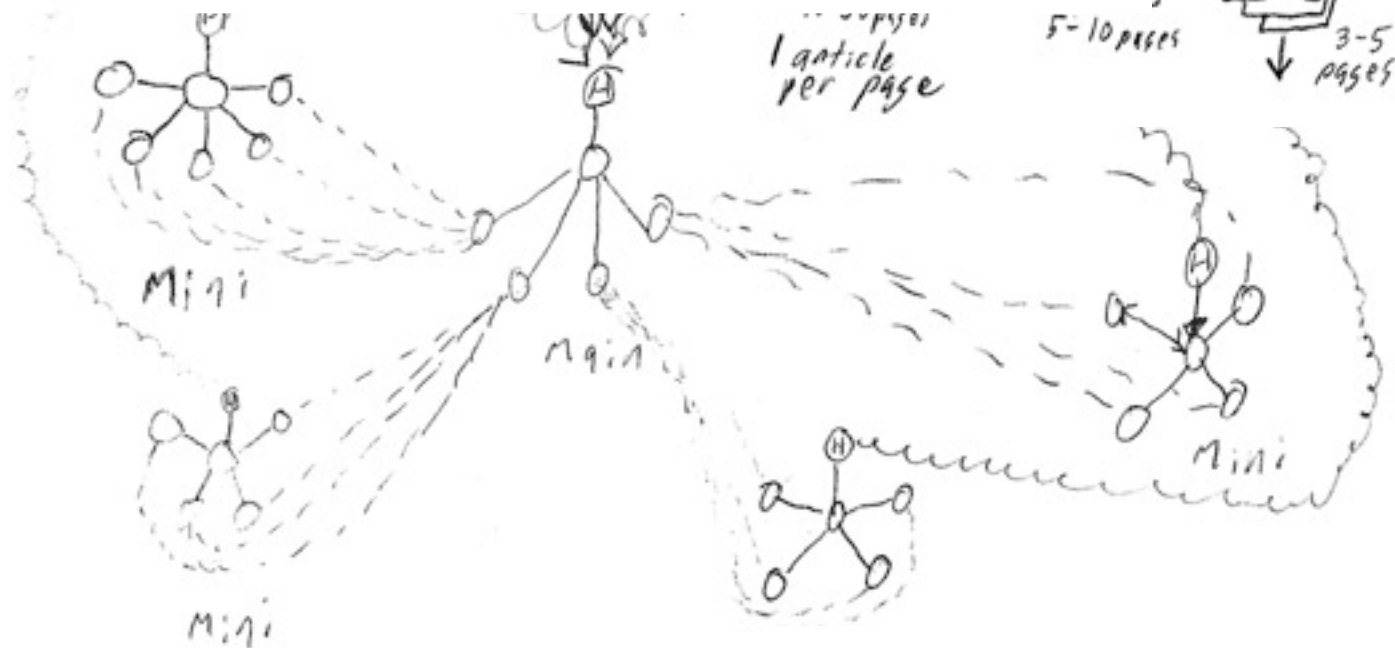
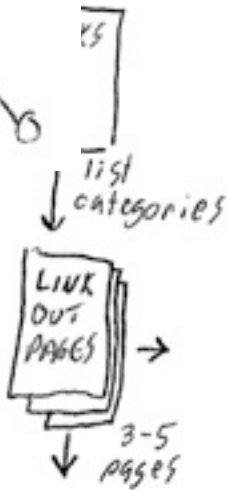


# Revenge of the Mininet



eclectic mix of central site deal to supporting sites



by Michael Campbell  
Author of [Nothing but 'Net](#) and [Clickin' it Rich](#)

## Foreword for 2008

Before you use this course, you'll need to subscribe to my Internet Marketing Secrets newsletter. Why? Because this course has been supplemented by the newsletter every two weeks, since it was written, and I'll tell you how to get all the backissues online. In addition, you'll want to be notified as I continue to a modify and adapt these affiliate marketing strategies, to what's working in today's competitive environment.

**Subscribe Free**: <http://www.InternetMarketingSecrets.com>

Second, a quick update. This ebook was originally written 2003 and updated in 2005. This was back before the whole web 2.0 thing, or the interactive web that we have today.

It was back before blogs and social bookmarking. Back before there was an abundance of free websites and hosting like Squidoo, MySpace and Facebook. Long before free video hosting like YouTube, MetaCafe and uStream.

Even though a lot has changed since this book was written, what has not changed is the concept of interlinking web properties that you control, to boost the rankings of whatever you choose to link to. So instead of taking this book off the market completely, I realized that the affiliate marketing strategies and linking diagrams are still very useful and decided to give it away free.

All you really need to do, is substitute free hosting services like Squidoo, instead of paying to use your own websites. And instead of using a site builder, use a free tool like Wordpress to blog and build pages.

If you apply these two simple changes, all the rest of the affiliate marketing and interlinking strategies still work extremely well. What may not work are some of the links to old products that are no longer on the market.

Where it was possible, I've linked to landing pages, rather than taking you directly to the product. Each landing page has an up to date list of all the top products in that category along with a short review.

Enjoy the journey my friends! And don't forget to subscribe to my newsletter. You won't want to miss out on all my current tips, tricks and long term strategies that are proven to work.

***Michael Campbell***

## Preface

Yes, these are the same linking strategies I use to generate over \$200,000 a year in pure profit, using nothing but affiliate programs. In this ebook, I want you to learn how you can too! Never before has there been a practical publication on linking strategies. Only my coaching clients know what you are about to discover.

In my first ebook "[Nothing but 'Net](#)" I told you how to get top search engine positioning and convert the prospect into a customer once they arrived.

In my second ebook "[Clickin' it Rich](#)" I told you exactly how to make money from affiliate programs. And how to position yourself in the middle of existing revenue streams.

In this, my third ebook, I clearly define the practical "missing link" from any "how to" book on the market. I show you exactly, how to take the tactical information contained in my first two books, create your own mininet empire, and put your earnings on autopilot, as you naturally climb to the top of the search engines. Enjoy the journey my friend, I wish you all the best!



By Michael Campbell  
President & CEO

Dynamic Media Corporation

<http://www.internetmarketingsecrets.com>

Legal stuff the lawyers made me say...

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## Introduction

### **Do mininets still work? Are they effective as they once were?**

September 2004 brought the fifth anniversary of the Mininet concept. So the burning questions on everyone's mind... "Does the mininet strategy still work? Does it continue to work with Google. What about Yahoo? How hard is it to do? How long does it take to become successful."

To put the record straight, and answer the questions on everyone's mind, here's a short introduction devoted to the subject of mininets. But first of all, we'll have a quick review. Just what the heck is a mininet anyway?

Way back in 1983, ARPANET first referred to its core of "interrelated sites" as the internet. It was in 1994 that the mainstream culture discovered the 'net and the web, started putting up sites and linking them to "related" content. It was this foundation rooted in history that sparked my idea and led to a series of linking experiments.

A mininet is just that, an interrelated, self-contained internet... within the internet. It is a cluster consisting of several small related sites.

Each page in the cluster is focused on a highly targeted keyword phrase. Each page is linked together with synonymous pages. This leads to natural link popularity and great search engine rankings. You control all the content on all the sites, the linking text, the structure of the network, how to monetize it, and everything else.

The mininet is as close as you can get to an "evergreen" search engine strategy. It worked back in 1999 when I revealed it to the public at Jonathan Mizel's internet marketing summit. It worked even better in 2003 when I wrote the ebook, "Revenge of the Mininet." It continues to dominate the engines into 2005. And it will continue to work into the foreseeable future.

Why? Because since 1983, it is deeply rooted in the very essence of what the internet is about... interlinked pages on related topics. And that is not likely to change, unless links to topics become unimportant... but there is nothing more important on the internet than links that lead to related topics. Nothing.

In fact, it's the very reason we have search engines... to find links on topics related to our search. Now you see why mininets cannot fail.

If you want mathematical proof, long time programmer, engineer and linking expert Leslie Rohde explains in Dynamic Linking (which you get as a bonus with this ebook) why mininets work so well.

You also get sample dynamic linking code that you can copy and paste into your pages. On top of all that, there's two hours of audio describing how to monetize your mininet traffic through affiliate programs and other means.

So do mininets still work? In a word... yes. Incredibly well. With over 1,700 copies of this ebook sold, and less than .001% returns, some people are making quiet fortunes, while sceptics sit idly by, still trying to make some sense of the monthly search engine changes.

If you're worried about making search engine friendly web sites, and want help with your pages, then Dr. Williams SEO Website Builder software - based on my strategies - is perfect for you. Even if you don't know anything about creating optimized web pages, this software will do the work for you. It will even tell you if you've accidentally over optimized a web page.

[SEO Website Builder](http://www.cdzn.com/wsb) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wsb>

Anyone can do this. But that said, I can't jump through the monitor and make you sit in front of the computer and do the work... but I would if I could. Just so you could prove to yourself - once and for all - that you can do it, and it's not that hard to do.

Mininets do work and will continue work into the future. They are the very foundation of the internet. They are the cornerstone on which the entire web was built.

Those who say mininets don't work, just want to keep you from being successful. It's true. They want to keep you down in their miserable company. You know what? You can break free, but you have to take the first step.

What are you going to do after the kids go to bed? What about this weekend after school, or after work this week? Are you going to watch TV, read a story, knit a scarf, or do you really need some other excuse not to succeed? Aren't you fed up working nine to five, procrastinating about the future, and wanting a better life?

It's easy to find niche markets, just by looking around your room and finding products in your home. Things you have in common with everyone else on the planet. (We'll talk more about this later.)

You then use keyword services like Wordtracker or Nichetracker to discover keywords, or niche areas, with lots of search engine traffic, but very few competing web pages. (FYI: The [Clickin' it Rich](#) Action Plan shows exactly how to use NicheBot and start making money online in as little as five hours.)

[NicheBot](http://www.cdzn.com/nbt) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/nbt>

[Wordtracker](http://www.cdzn.com/wtr) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wtr>

The only thing remaining to do, after you find the market is to offer web pages to satisfy the searches. The best way to do that, is with a mininet.

What is important, is that you get busy and start creating your pages today. You'll start noticing results in just a few weeks. We've made it as simple and affordable as possible. The rest is up to you.

Also, you don't have to worry about being a webmaster or html guru in order to achieve your goals. There is help making web pages, and linking the whole site together properly, just get your own copy of Dr. Williams' SEO Website Builder. You'll be glad you did. I highly endorse this product and use it every day for website creation.

Pretty soon it will be able to build mininets at the touch of a button, in addition to it's latest updates, which include Dynamic Linking capability and Over Optimization Protection. This website builder is the best on the market and keeps getting better with every upgrade. You'll wonder how you ever did without it, once you start using it.

[SEO Website Builder](http://www.cdzn.com/wsb) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wsb>

If you've already read this book, I encourage you to go back and read it again, along with Dynamic Linking and all the other bonus materials. You'll want to brush up on the latest techniques. That way, it will be fresh in your mind, as you continue to produce mininets and use them to make affiliate revenue, sell your own ebooks, or help promote larger sites you may own.

The real trick is to remember to monetize everything. Every ad network, banner, button, classified, endorsement, opinion, recommendation... every single link leaving your site must make money, or take it down and replace it with one that does.

## Practical Linking Diagrams You Can Use

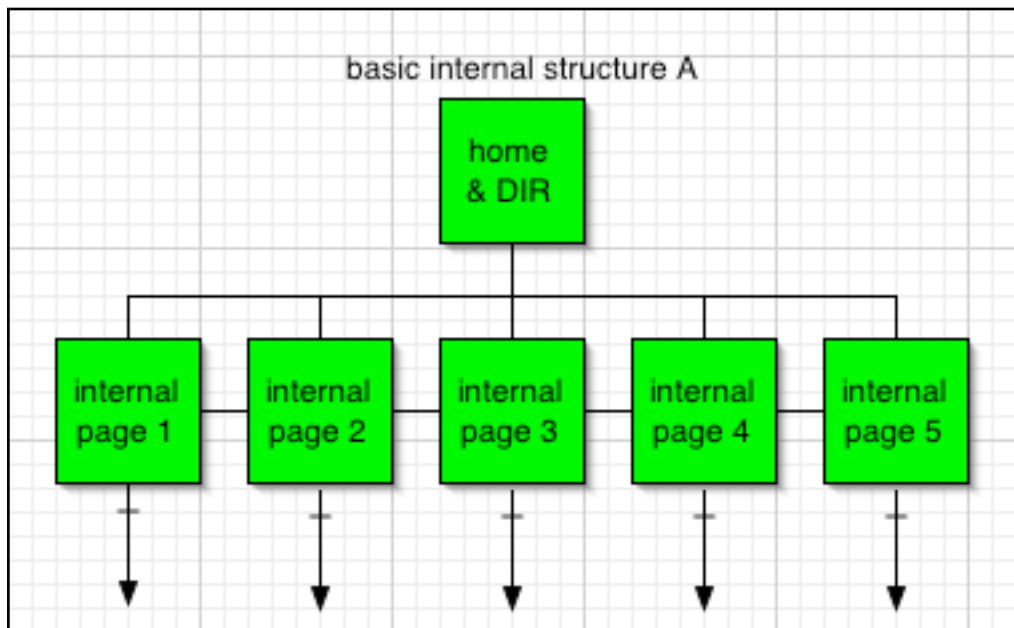


Fig. 6.1

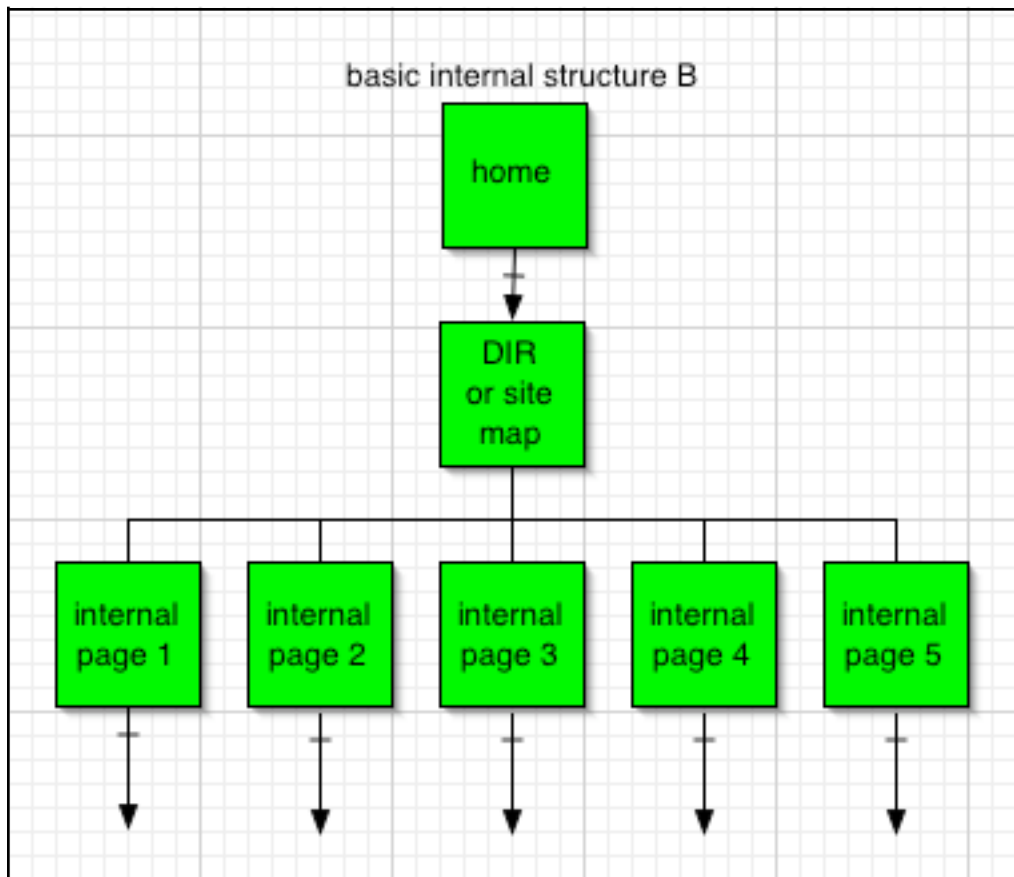


Fig. 6.2

Throughout this document, you'll encounter diagrams that look like the ones above. I've used – what are now considered to be – web standard symbols to describe the web sites and linking strategies you are about to discover.

## What These Symbols Mean

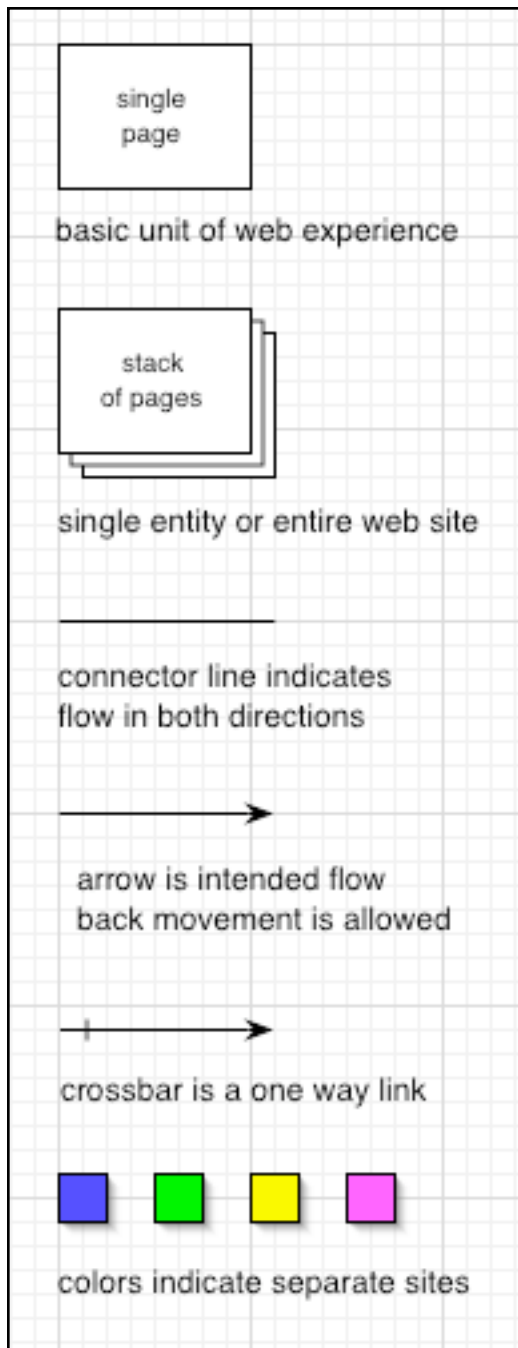


Fig. 7.1

The most basic unit of web experience is the single web page. It is represented in this document by a simple rectangle of varying sizes.

The stack of pages represents a group of pages similar in nature. They are often identical in terms of content, or just grouped together for the sake of clarity and reducing document clutter.

The most basic connector is the line. Link traffic can flow in either direction. No path for human users or search engines is stressed or implied.

The arrow shows an intended direction of linking and traffic flow. It does not prevent backward linking or backward traffic flow.

An arrow with a crossbar denotes a one way link. Traffic moves forward in the direction of the arrow. No backward linking or traffic is allowed. (Unless of course the user hits the back button, which cannot be avoided.)

Different colors represent different web sites. Each color is its own minisite. The purpose is to demonstrate how the internal linking strategies relate to the external links.

### To find out even more about these symbols

As I mentioned, these symbols are now standard and available for most drawing programs. They are courtesy of Jessie James Garret, author of "The Elements of User Experience." The complete visual vocabulary for describing information architecture and interaction design. You can get full details on his web site. <http://www.jjg.net/ia/visvocab/>

# Angel and the Butterfly

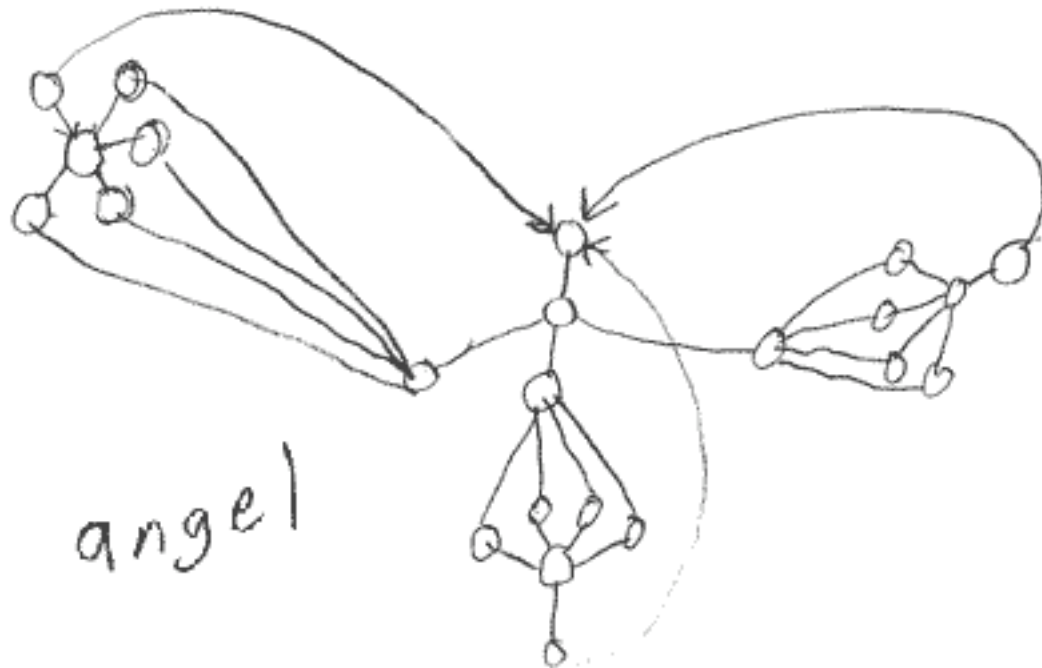


Fig. 8.1

The angel and butterfly are named for the way they look, when the linking strategies are sketched on paper. The angel uses three minisites to promote a destination, where the butterfly uses four or more. Cross linking minisites in this manner is one of my favorite and most effective mininet strategies.

We'll examine the butterfly in detail using standard diagramming techniques over the next few pages.

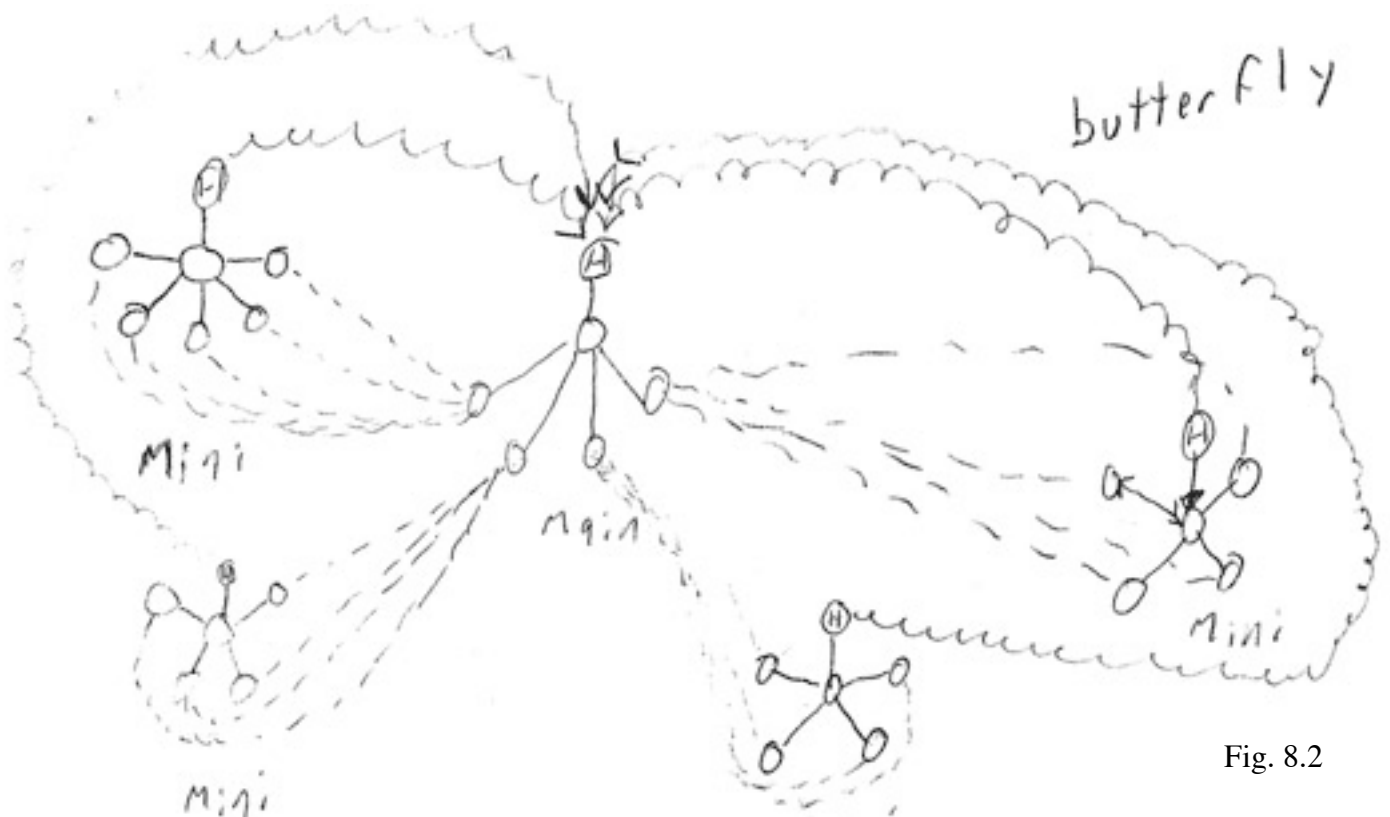


Fig. 8.2

## Internal Linking of the Butterfly Minisite

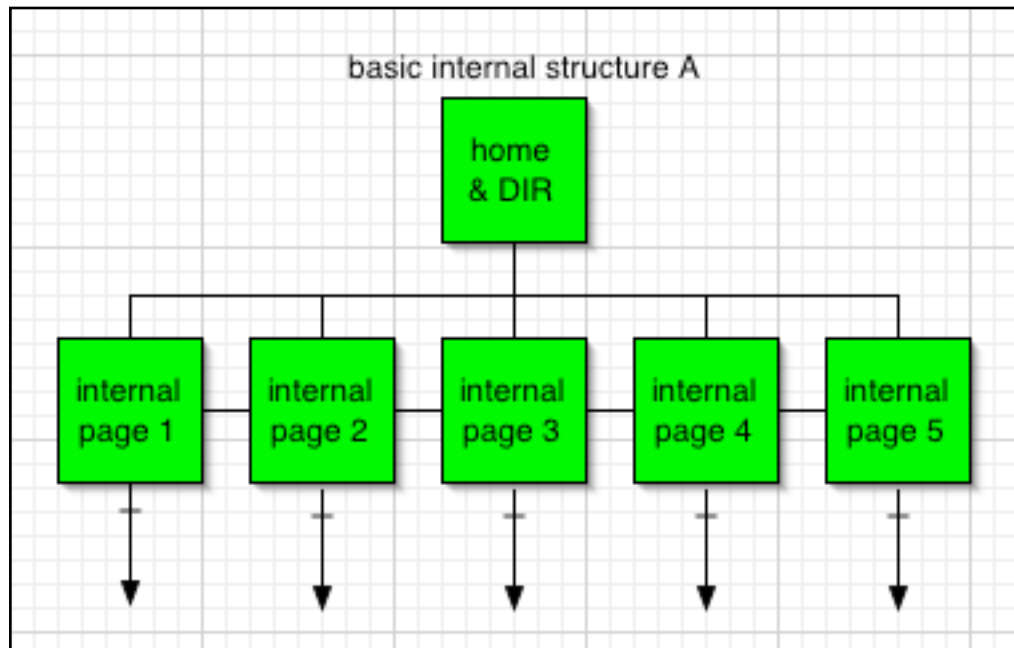


Fig. 9.1

As shown in Fig 9.1, some people prefer to make their home page the site map or directory, with links to all internal pages. Personally, I prefer to make a one way link from the home page to the site map, as in Fig. 9.2, which acts as a directory, that links to all the internal pages.

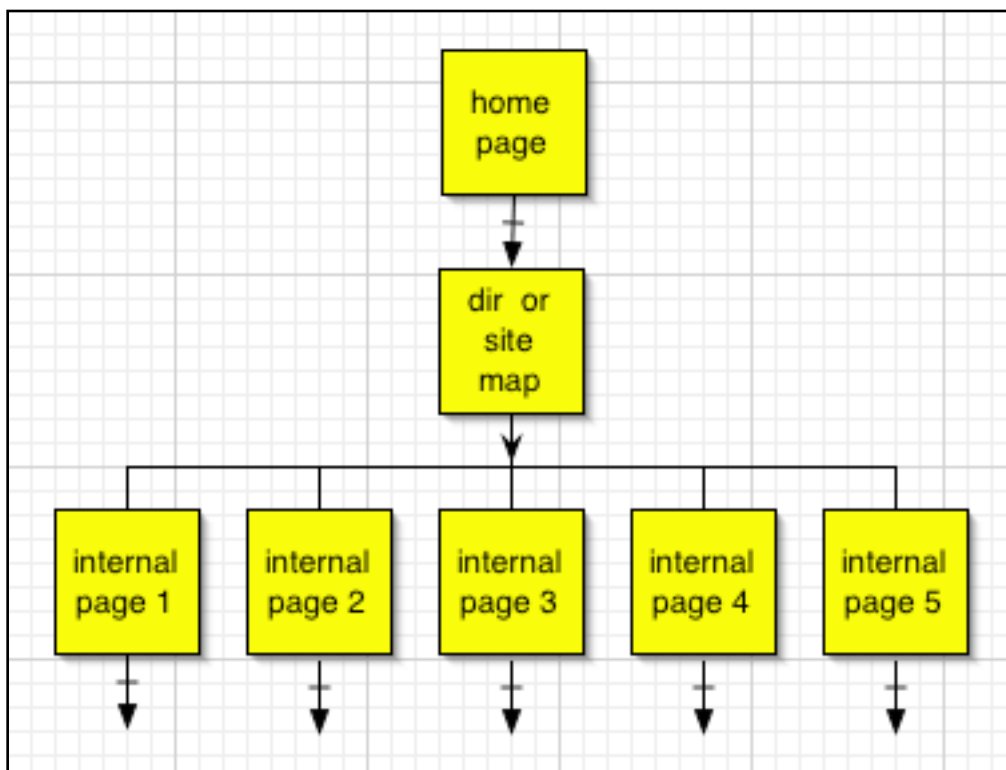


Fig. 9.2

One of the main reasons for following the “one way link” strategy, is because it fits the hub and authority model which is important to Google. If you have a link to your home page from a hub like Yahoo or Dmoz, that’s an example of a hub leading to an authority.

The home page has only two or three links on it, which qualifies it as an authority. It has a one way link to another hub, the site map, which links out to all the internal pages of the site. Hub like Yahoo, leads to home page authority, which leads to site map hub, which leads to internal page authorities.

The site map links to the internal pages and vice versa. The internal pages can also link to each other. Whether or not to link all the internal pages to each other is a personal preference. One that will require experimentation, to see what works best for your product category.

## **From Minisite to Mininet... the Concept**

The one way links leaving the internal pages of the minisites, are usually affiliate links containing tracking codes. The minisite has done its job at this point and quickly gets the shopper headed to the advertiser’s site where they can actually make the purchase.

The mininet concept works best with makes and model numbers. This allows us to optimize each page of the minisite for a highly targeted set of keywords.

The mininet concept does not rely on anyone else to provide your own link popularity. By linking several sites on related topics the mininet quickly rises in the search engines. If the pages are optimized correctly, top ten positioning should be assured.

In figure 11.1 on the next page, each site has only four internal pages. This was done for the sake of simplicity in the diagrams. It is best to vary the number of pages and the byte size of pages in each minisite. No duplicating allowed. Start each page with fresh content and avoid templates.

The topic of each site can be anything you choose. Anything you are passionate about or know a lot about. Just make sure it is consumable, has plenty of accessories, or a decent profit margin.

For example, lets use cell phones. The red site’s home page might be optimized for nokia 5160, the directory optimized for nokia 5160 accessories. The internal pages are each optimized for a different keyword phrase. One for nokia 5160 batteries, one for 5160 handsfree kits, one for 5160 faceplates and another for 5160 chargers.

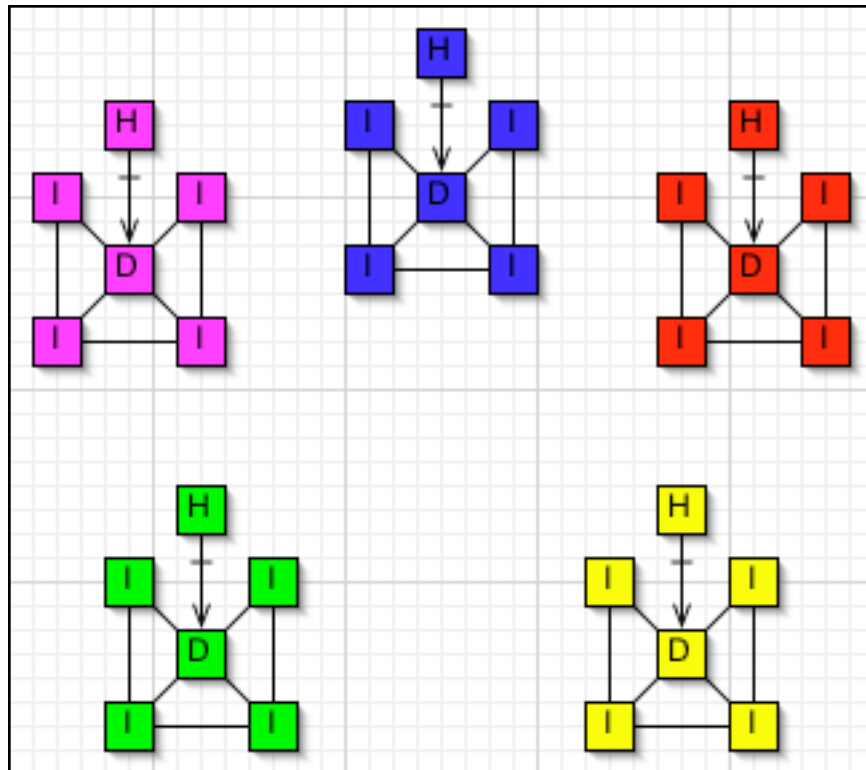


Fig. 11.1

The yellow site is almost identical in nature, except it is optimized for another model like the 5190. Likewise, the green site may have pages for faceplates, batteries and handsfree kits, but is optimized for yet another nokia model.

Note that there are no "about us" or "contact us" pages in the minisites. Those pages are on the central blue "Advertiser's" site where the actual purchase is made... The final destination of all the sites in the butterfly mininet.

A certain amount of experimentation will be required, to find what linking strategy fits your search engine optimization style.

Please note, that everything you are about to read, are not hard and fast rules, nor are they etched in stone. It's not as important to copy the butterfly exactly, as it is to create an interlinked network of sites. Sometimes, the most effective results come from mixing one or more linking strategies.

The point being, don't be paralyzed by fear into inaction. Don't worry if your pages are "good enough" and don't be afraid of making mistakes. They're just web pages and nothing to be afraid of. Make one page and move on.

Ok, time out! I want you to take a look at your calendar now, and make an appointment, a promise to yourself. I want you to commit a five hour block within the next week, to make your minisite network. And while you're at it, book another five hour block next week. Make a sticky note, paste it on your monitor. Promise yourself you won't just read about it, you'll do it!

## The Butterfly Home Page Linking Strategy

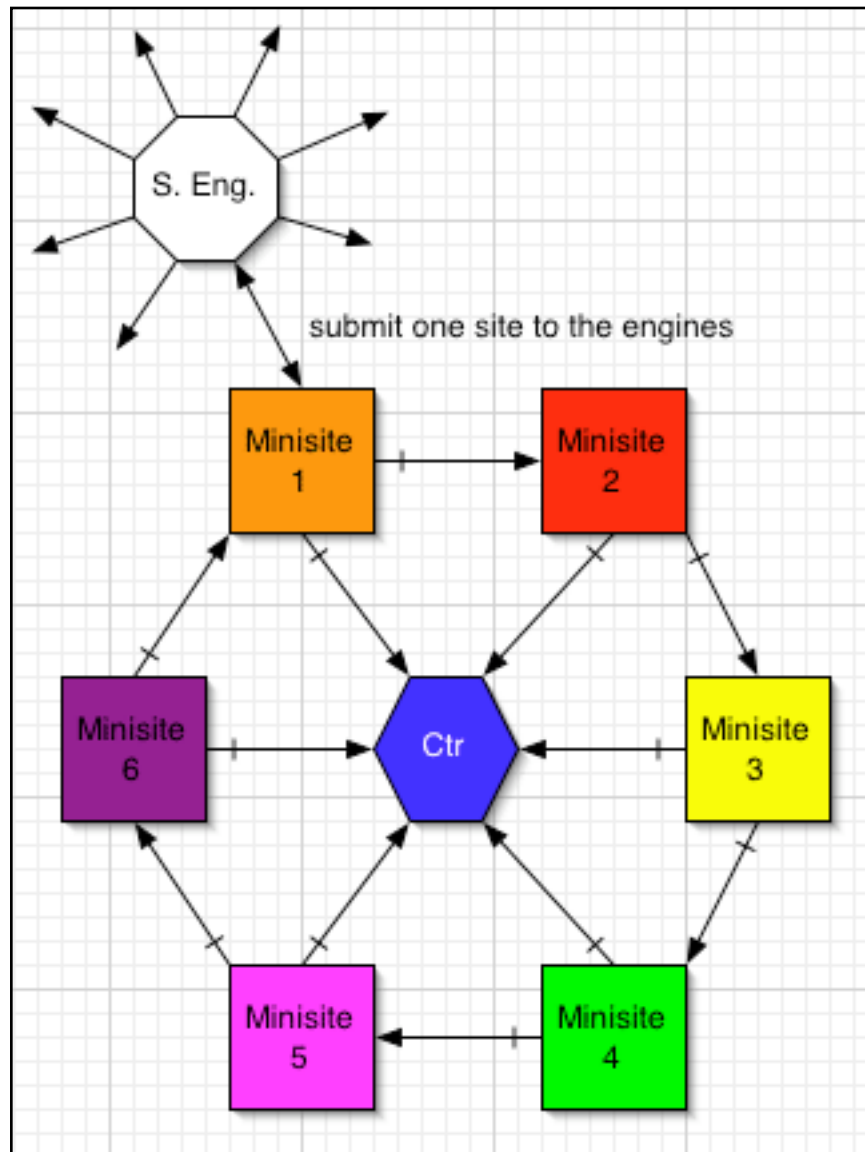


Fig. 12.1

- 1) Do not link all minisite home pages together in the butterfly model.
- 2) Each site links to the next like spokes in the rim of a wheel.
- 3) Site three, links to site four, which links to five.
- 4) Site five does not link back to four, or three, it links to site six.
- 5) All sites link to the Central site where the purchase can be made.
- 6) Submit one site to all the free directory style portals.
- 7) Once listed, submit the same site to the crawling search engines.
- 8) Wait for the big crawlers to come and "discover" your other minisites.

## Review of the Butterfly Internal Structure

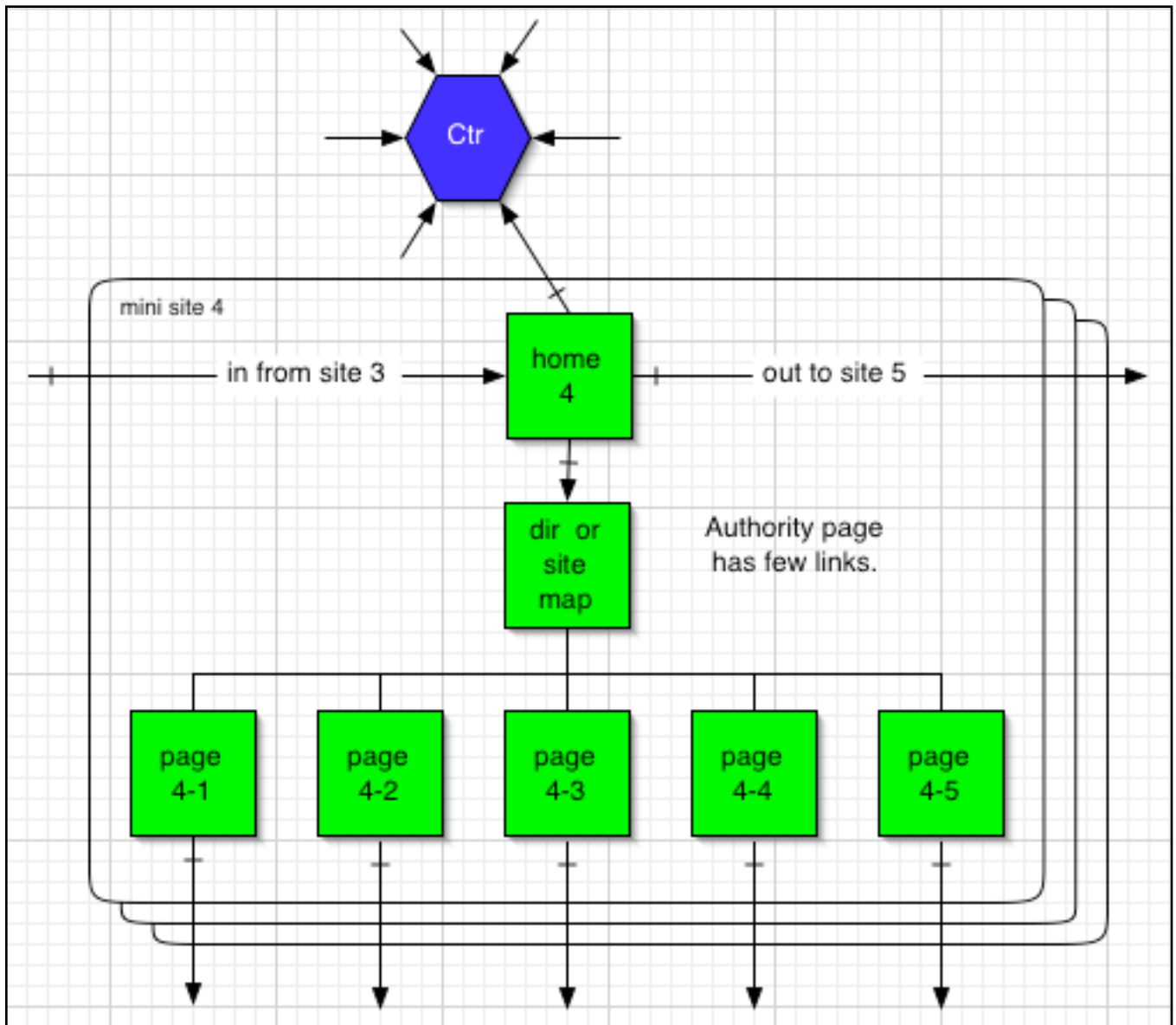


Fig. 13.1

- 1) Note that the internal linking structure remains unaltered from figure 9.2.
- 2) Green home page 4 has one incoming link from yellow site 3's home page.
- 3) Green home page 4 has three outgoing links.
- 4) One outgoing link goes to pink minisite 5 home page.
- 5) One link goes to the Central site for affiliate revenue or link popularity.
- 6) One link goes inside the green site to the internal directory or site map.

## Butterfly External Linking Structure - A

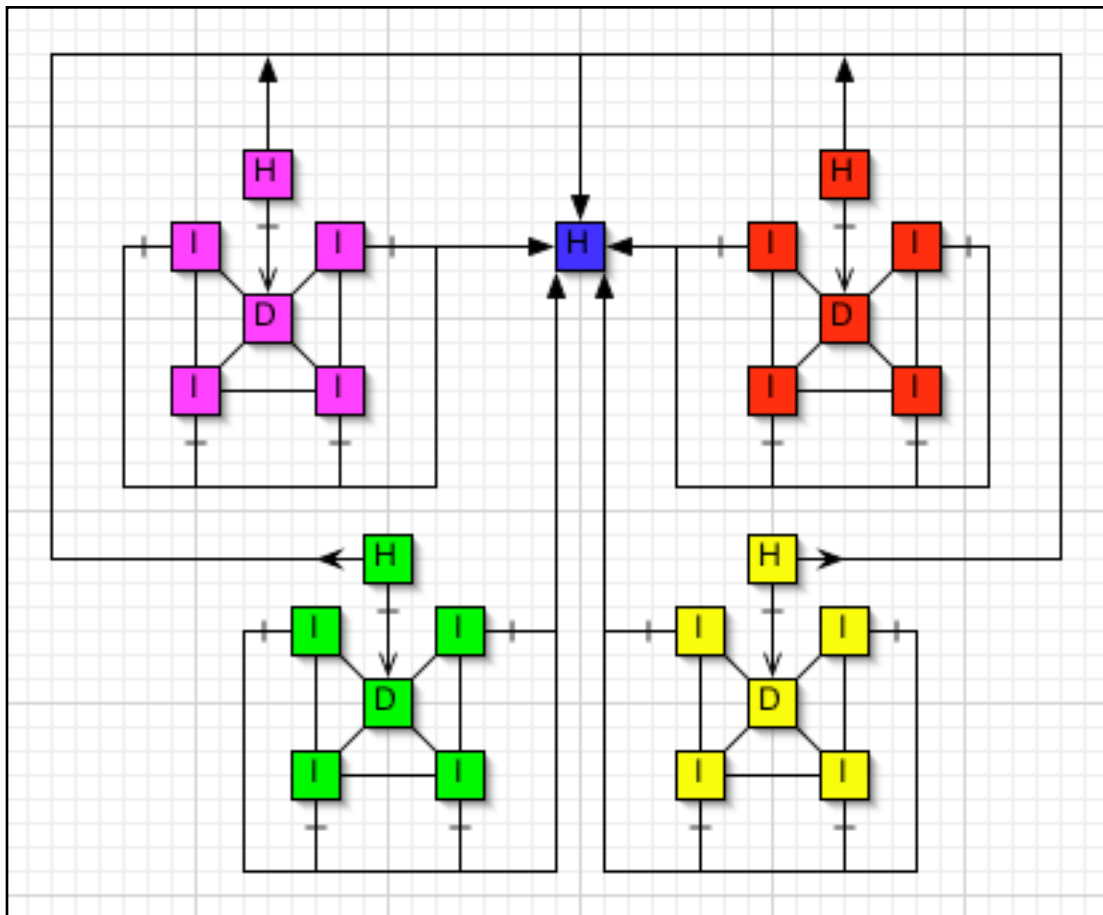


Fig. 14.1

This diagram shows a typical linking arrangement for an affiliate program, where you only have access to the home page of the advertiser's site. You as the publisher, have little choice but to promote the home page only.

Just be sure that the advertiser has done correct search engine optimization. Everything from the meta tags, to the url, to the headlines on the page, should reflect the exact same keywords you are using to promote their site.

This cluster can also be very effective promoting a keyword rich sales letter. Most info product and ebook affiliate programs have very long sales letters, with plenty of keywords. Examine the advertiser's site in detail, and choose related, yet different keywords for each incoming page.

If its your own product, you as the advertiser can control the optimization of the Central site. The title of the page, the opening headline and the first paragraph are critical. They must contain your target keywords and words that are synonymous with your keywords.

Make the Central page between 10K and 15K in size. Put your keywords in sub headlines, paragraphs and alt tags throughout the page.

Remember, in the end, any one web page can be "known for" or have a "Topic" of about 10 keywords, or five keyword pairs. Be sure to focus on one keyword pair as a primary set of keywords. Then use up to four more additional keyword pairs to get secondary search engine traffic.

If you need help analyzing the Central site, or any web page to determine its Reputation or Topic, a tool like OptiLink will do that for you.

[OptiLink](http://www.cdzn.com/opl) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/opl>

It takes any web page and tells you exactly what all the incoming links say the page is about (its Reputation), and counts keyword densities on the page to discover what the search engines "think" the page is about (its Topic.) The two must match, or be in agreement with each other for best results.

## Butterfly External Linking Structure - B

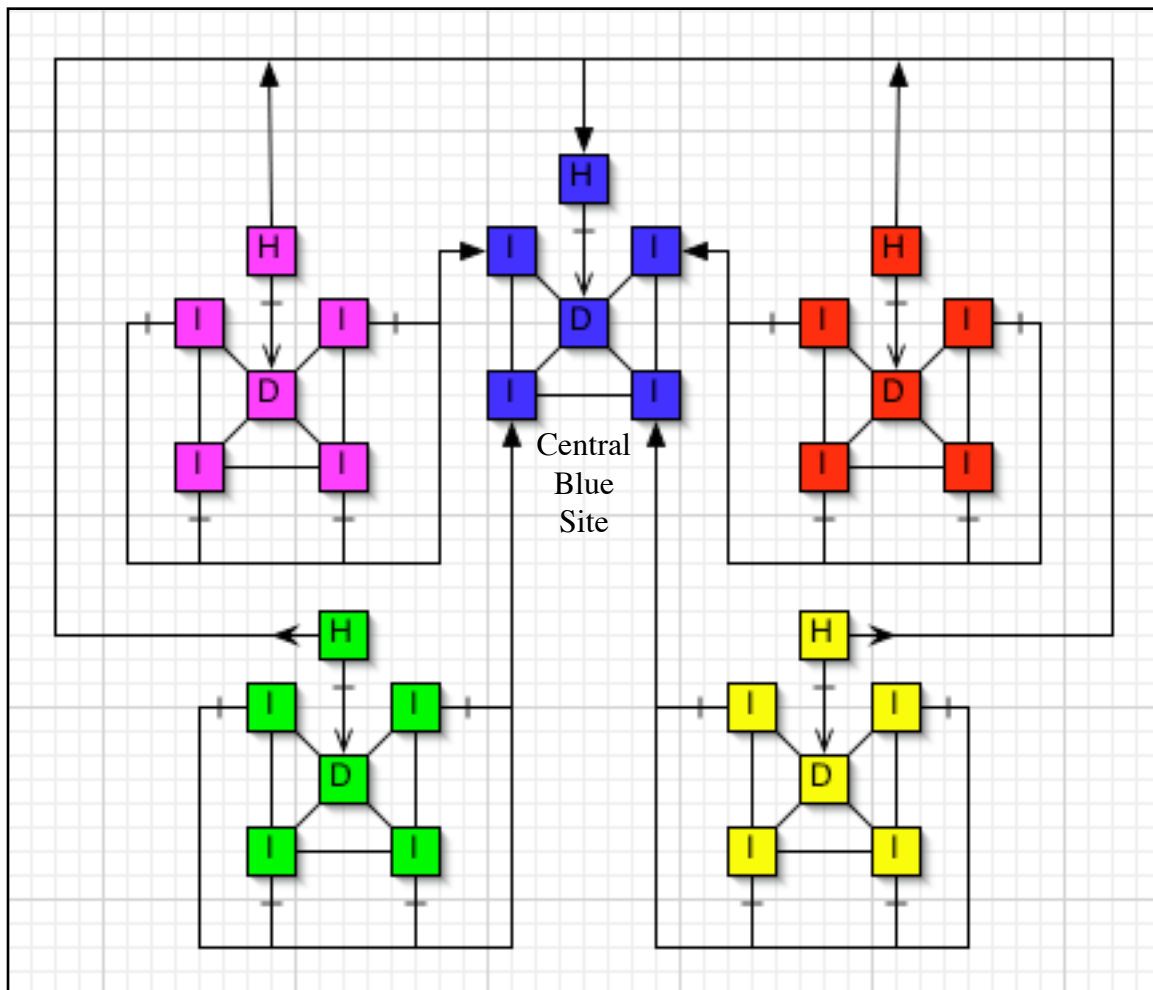


Fig. 15.1

In this arrangement, Fig 15.1, the advertiser has given affiliate publishers access to internal pages of the Central blue site. This is perfect, as it allows keyword rich internal pages on the yellow site, to link directly to a same topic page on the blue site.

This linking strategy is also ideal if you own the Central blue site. It allows you to build an entire yellow minisite on one topic. Then link all the internal pages of the yellow site, to one keyword related page on the Central blue site, where the actual purchases can be made.

In our previous example we optimized the yellow site's internal pages for different cell phone accessories. One page each for; nokia 5160 batteries, nokia 5160 faceplates, nokia 5160 chargers and nokia 5160 handsfree kits.

Link all four of those internal pages to one internal page on the blue site. Now all the incoming links are in agreement. The destination site's Reputation matches its Topic exactly, by being optimized for nokia 5160 as its primary keyword set. It is also optimized for secondary words like handsfree, faceplates, batteries and chargers.

All you need to do is replicate the process for the green, red and purple sites. Optimize each internal page on the blue site for a different make and model.

If you do not have makes and model numbers available, you can use names of manufacturers, processes, names of people, colors, geographical information, product names (within the fair trade or common law guidelines of your area), breeds, any kind of numbers, made up words, common misspellings, just about anything unique.

As I said in the beginning, the simple key to easy money... is to do your keyword research first. Everything else you do stems from that research. In the beginning go for the low hanging fruit or easy keyword niches.

Everyone get born, dies, needs food, clothes and shelter. Many people get married, wear glasses, graduate, have plants, pets, entertain, cook, want insurance, listen to music, take pictures, watch movies, read books, play sports, go camping, buy a home, fix things, want self improvement...

The more people who do something the bigger the market. Sometimes you just need to research a single word like BBQ, to find hundreds of potential niches. That's lots of people searching with few competing pages.

As you get more confident in your abilities, start trying to capture more competitive, more generic keyword categories, like camping stoves and gas lanterns. Or maybe go after something like t-shirts and posters for various kinds of animals, like dogs, cats and fish, using the Matrix mininet, which you'll discover over the next few pages.

## The Matrix Linking Strategy

The Matrix is an expansion of the Angel and Butterfly models. Some said it looked like a window when sketched. Others claimed it was a “pain in the glass” ;- ) because its harder to set up. Originally it was called the “Window of Opportunity” because it was so successful. But the name Matrix finally stuck.

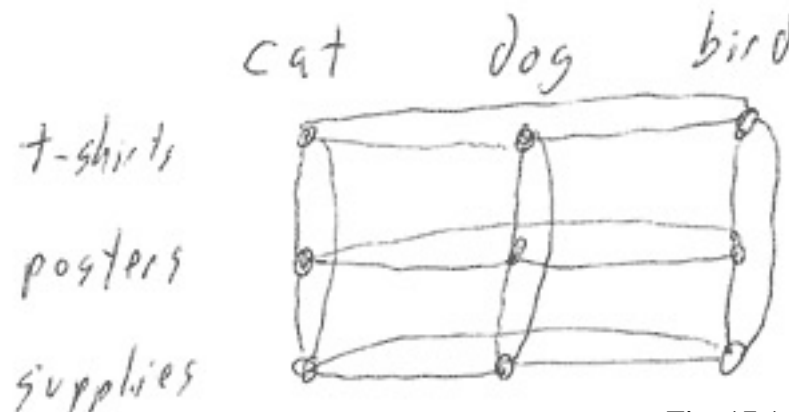


Fig. 17.1

The beauty is... it helps us be competitive in more generic keyword categories, while having a modular structure, so we can continue to add sites into the Matrix as time permits.

What we do is start with three to five minisites and link them together in a ring, very similar to the Butterfly. The main keyword is of the ring is t-shirts. The secondary keyword changes with each minisite. In this case we've chosen a moderately competitive field... animal t-shirts.

For the sake of example in Fig. 17.2, I've chosen generic cat, dog and bird, instead of particular breeds, hoping to capture more generic traffic. Of course you could always optimize each minisite's internal pages for specific breeds, if your keyword research shows a lot of searches for certain animals.

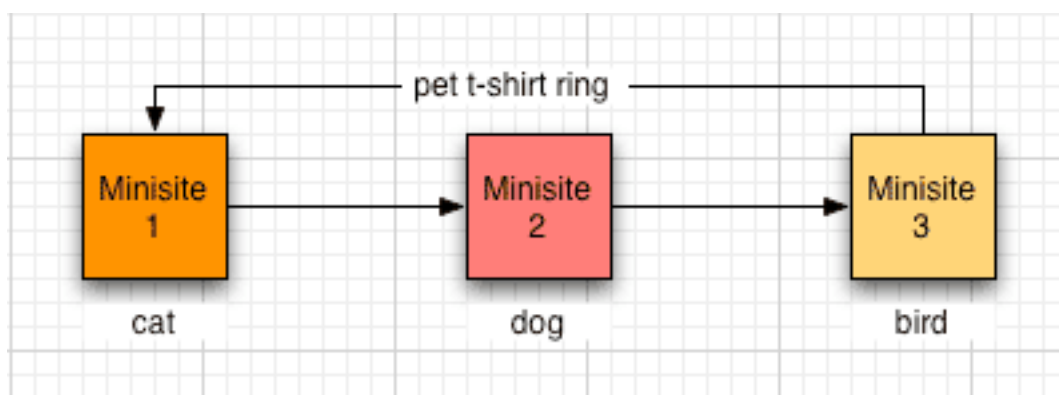


Fig. 17.2

## Building the Matrix - Horizontal Elements

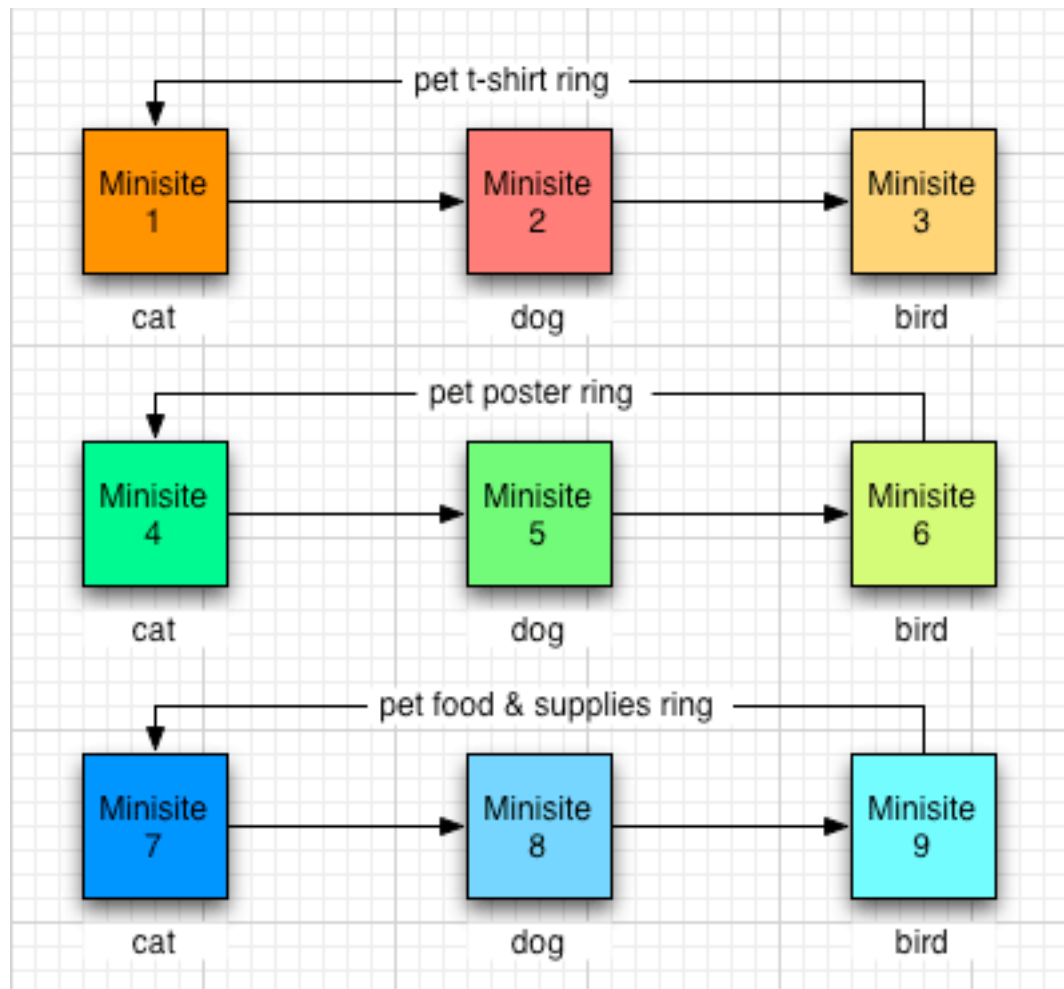


Fig. 18.1

Keeping along the idea of pet related theme sites, we set up additional horizontal rings of sites. After t-shirts, a very popular item is posters, especially with the younger crowd, all the way up to university students. It makes an excellent second horizontal ring in our Matrix.

My research showed that pet owners tend to be a little fanatic about their animals. Cat lovers hate dog owners and vice versa. But because they are so passionate, cat owners also like to buy cat calendars, mugs, cat pictures and posters, gourmet catnip & food, scratching posts, automatic litter boxes, treats... whew! The list is endless... which makes perfect mininet material.

I've used only three horizontal rings for the sake of simplicity. But you can keep adding as many as you want. Just keep the same theme going. In our example above, we could have easily added topics like figurines, clip art, screen savers, etc, in the horizontal rings, and fish, reptiles, hamsters, etc, in the vertical rings, which we'll start examining on the next page in Fig 19.1.

## Building the Matrix - Vertical Elements

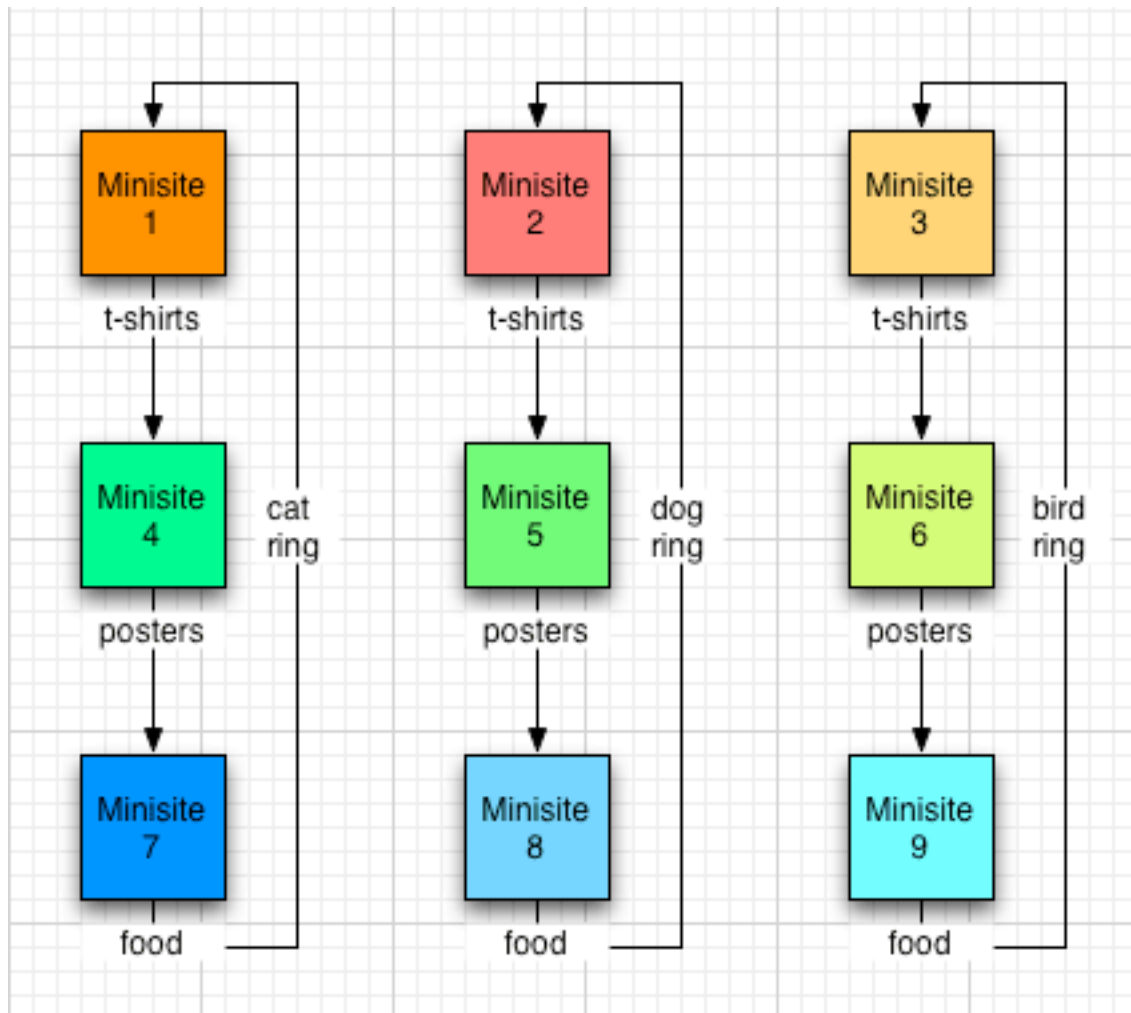


Fig. 19.1

We've been focusing until now on the horizontal rings of the Matrix. But what you may have missed is its hidden power. The Vertical rings.

On the previous page, we were talking about a t-shirt ring, a poster ring, a pet accessories ring, but what you may not have noticed, is that all this time, we were in fact building a secondary network of vertical rings. One for cats, one for dogs and one for birds.

To tap the full power of the Matrix, the keyword sets must remain interrelated to one another. The top red horizontal ring is all about animal t-shirts, the left most vertical ring is all about cat products. On the next page, we'll show you how to start linking them all together.

## Linking up the horizontal and vertical minisites

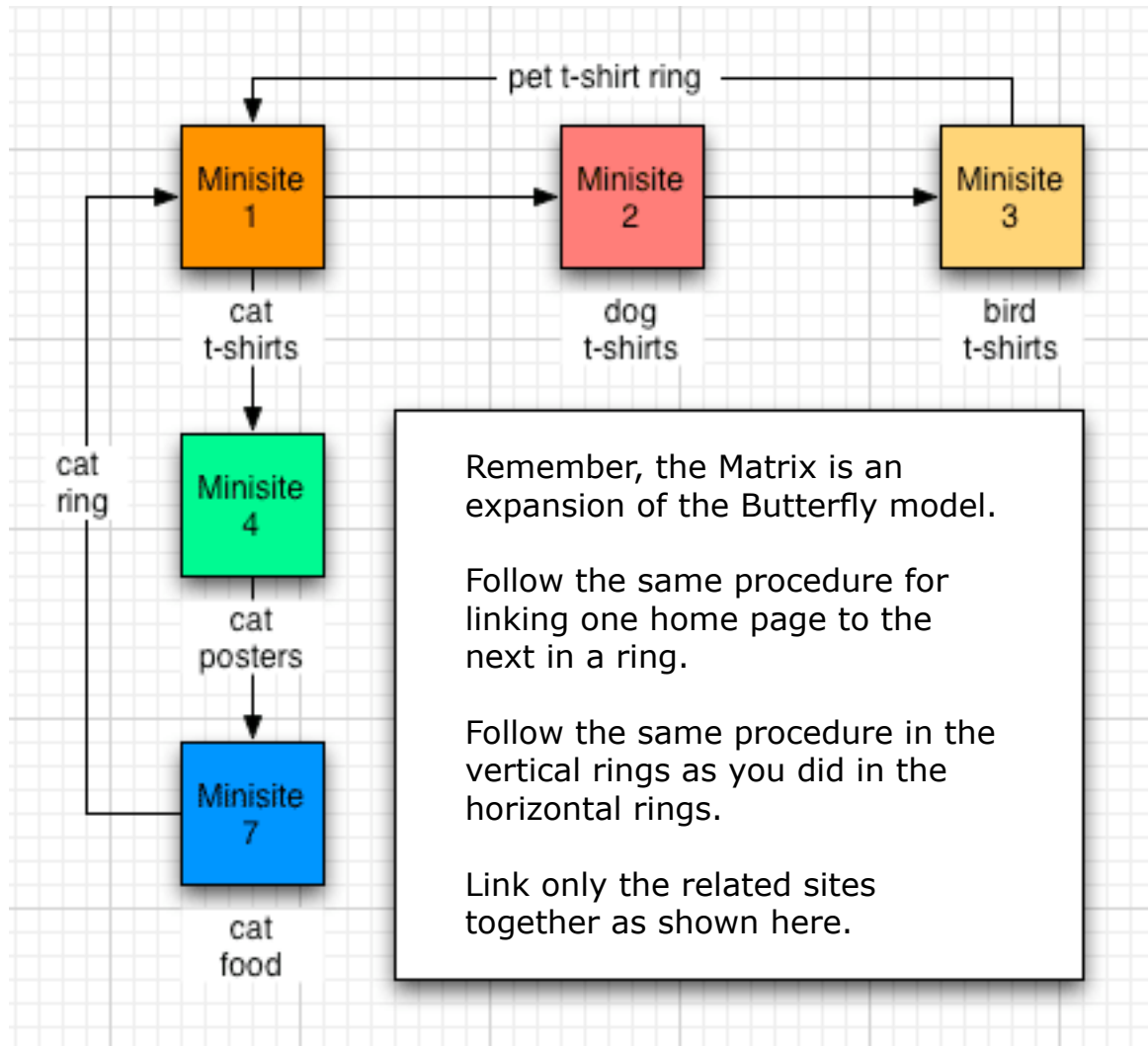


Fig. 20.1

I hope you have one of those “aha” moments when you start realizing where all this is going. Suddenly you don’t have just three minisites working together, you have cross linked five of them, making your presence in the search engines much more powerful.

By linking only related topics, we maintain tight semantics and thematic language throughout the whole mininet. We want all our on page factors to be in agreement. We don’t want the search engines to have any “doubt” as to what our mininet is about.

Also, when it comes to off page factors, we control the keywords. In other words, we have complete control in our mininet, to build a Reputation for any given page, by what we say about it when we link to it. The more times we link to a page with the link “cat posters” the more the search engines will “believe” the page is “about” cat posters. By matching our off page links to our on page keywords, we have our best chance at dominating the search engines.

But the coolest thing about the Matrix... the unadvertised bonus, is that by adding the vertical links, we bring the search engines and buying traffic into our next horizontal ring, as show below in Fig. 21.1.

We've gone from three interlinked sites up to nine, but not all sites are linked directly. The ones that are linked directly are shown with the red, blue and black lines. All the t-shirt ones are linked, so are all the cat ones. But the only way to get to dog posters from cat t-shirts, is through a poster or dog site.

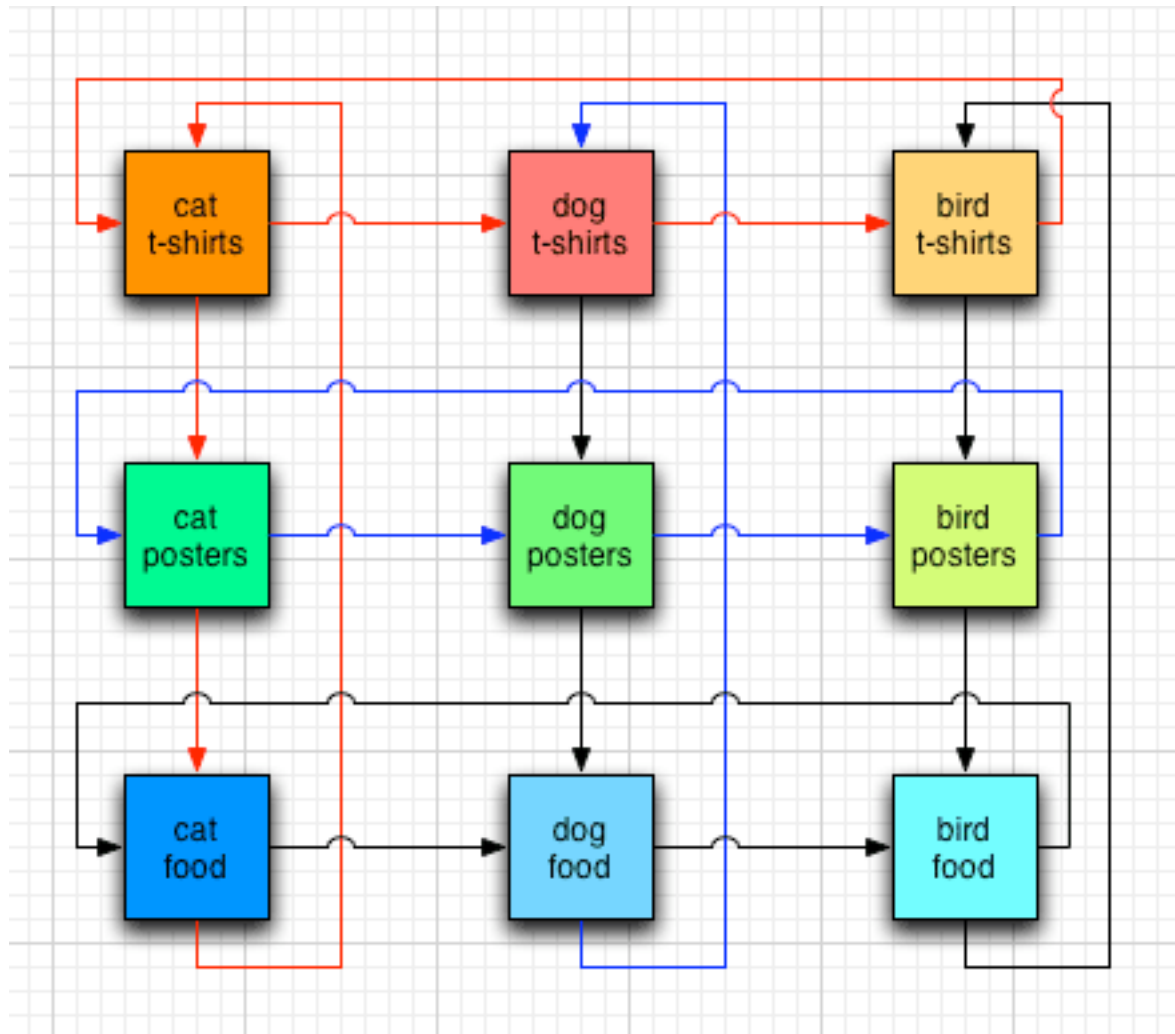


Fig. 21.1

Depending on how you set things up, you could be very sneaky. It may look to the searcher that they've found a series of sites all about animal t-shirts, but "advertising" on the cat t-shirt site is a cat "poster" site. When they arrive at the cat poster site, it has a totally different design, or look and feel, so it appears to be a totally separate entity.

After tracking traffic patterns, people interested in cat t-shirts, were also interested in cat posters. Then while on the cat poster site, they'll saw ads for other animal posters like dogs, birds, horses, whales, and purchased additional merchandise. Remember to monetize every single link, so no matter how they leave your site, you make a commission.

And finally, as in the Butterfly model, if you need - or want - to add a Central site into the Matrix, go ahead. Leverage your Matrix to boost positioning of the Central site, or send it traffic for additional affiliate revenue. It's up to you.

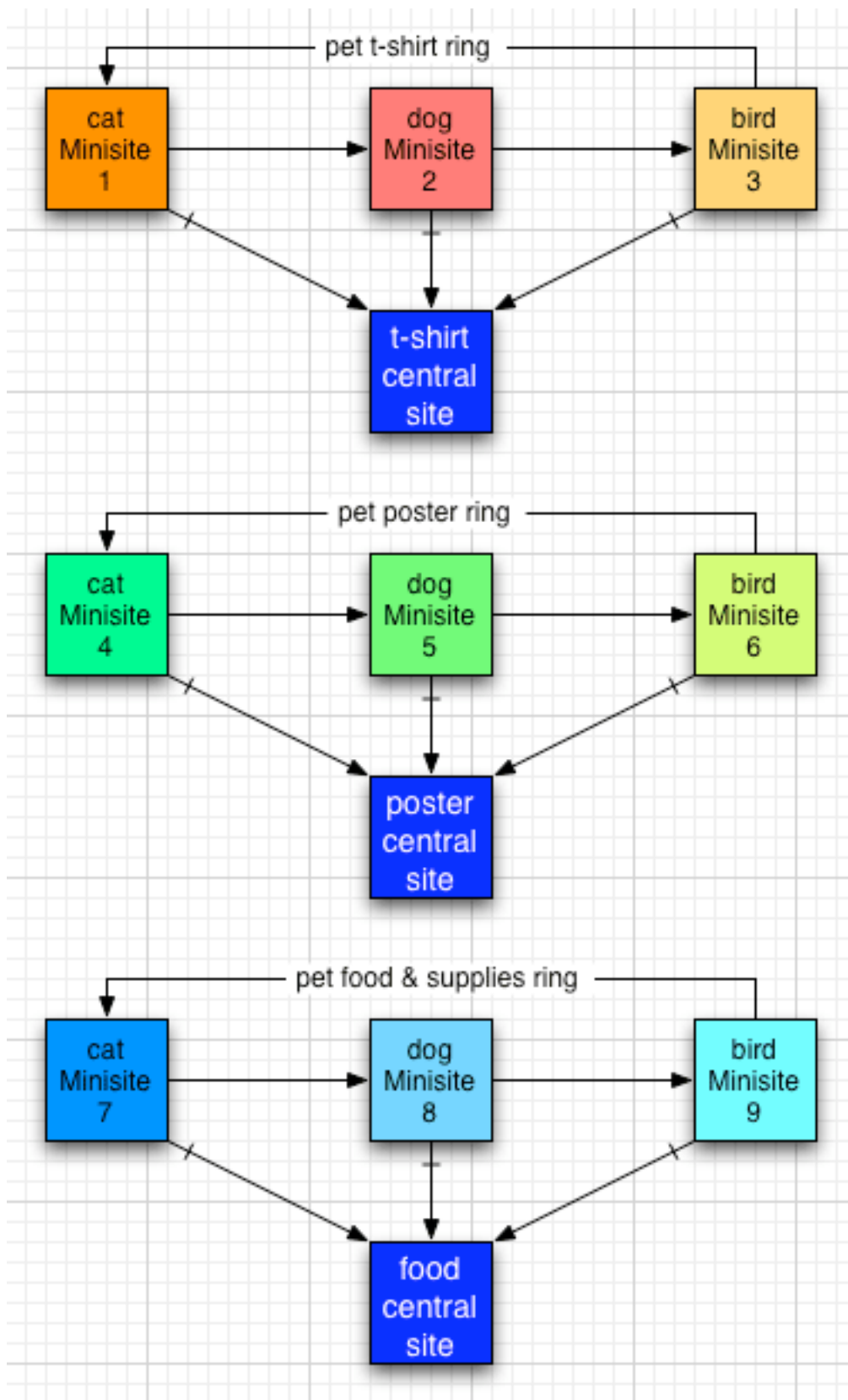


Fig. 22.1

# The “Diamond” Linking Strategy

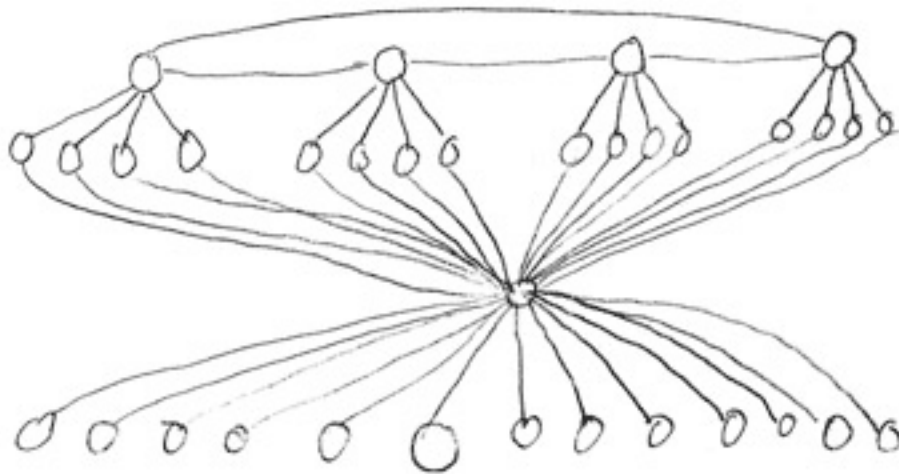


Fig.23.1

The diamond - again, so called for the way it looks when sketched - is another highly effective mininet linking strategy. An interesting phenomena is that the topics of the minisites and the Central site, don't have to be closely related.

Only the links coming into the Central site must remain consistent in what they say about the Central site. Focus on no more than two primary sets of incoming keywords in links, and up to six secondary words that can be added either before or after the primary keyword pair.

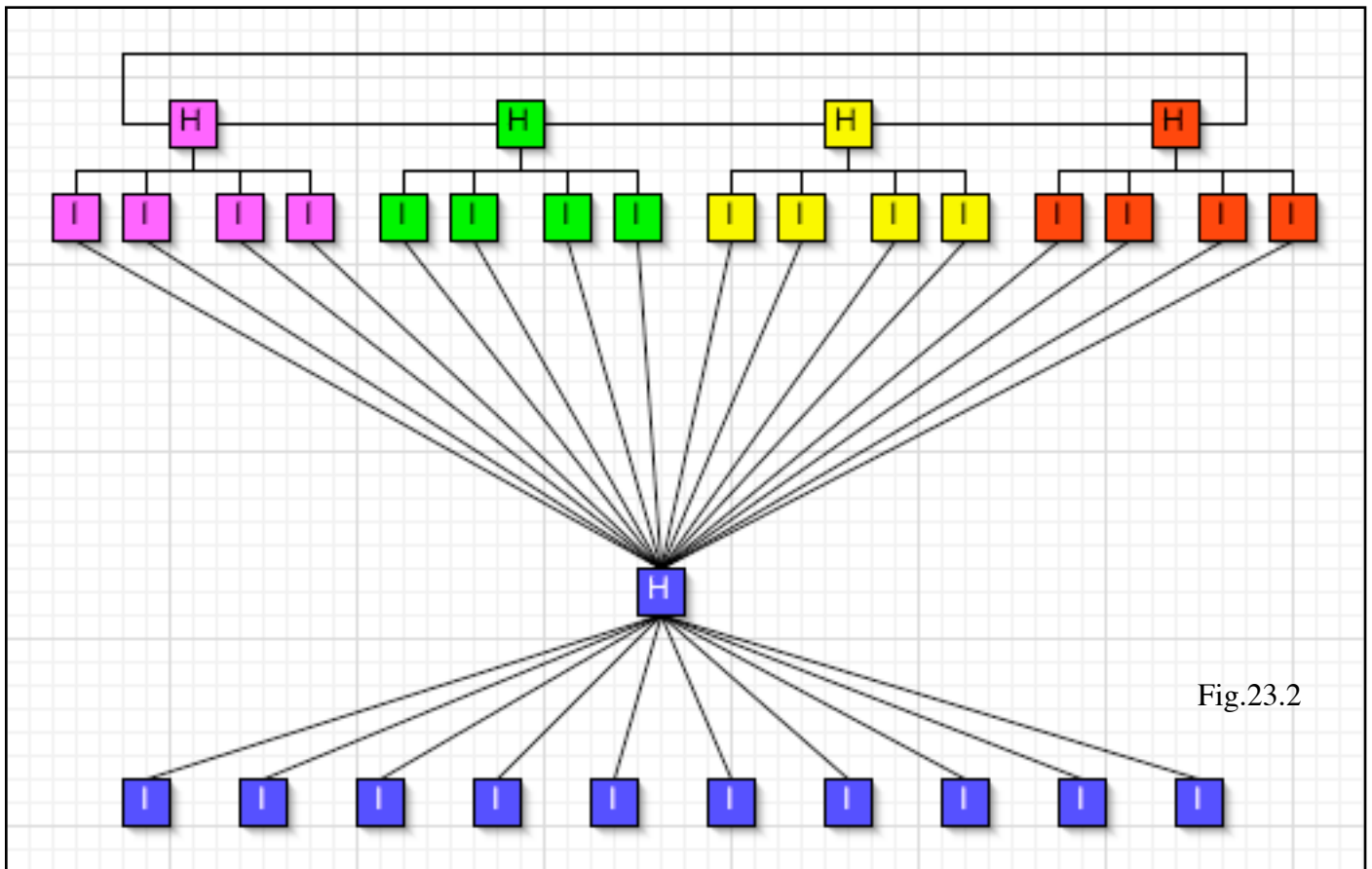


Fig.23.2

## The “Niche Site” Linking Strategy

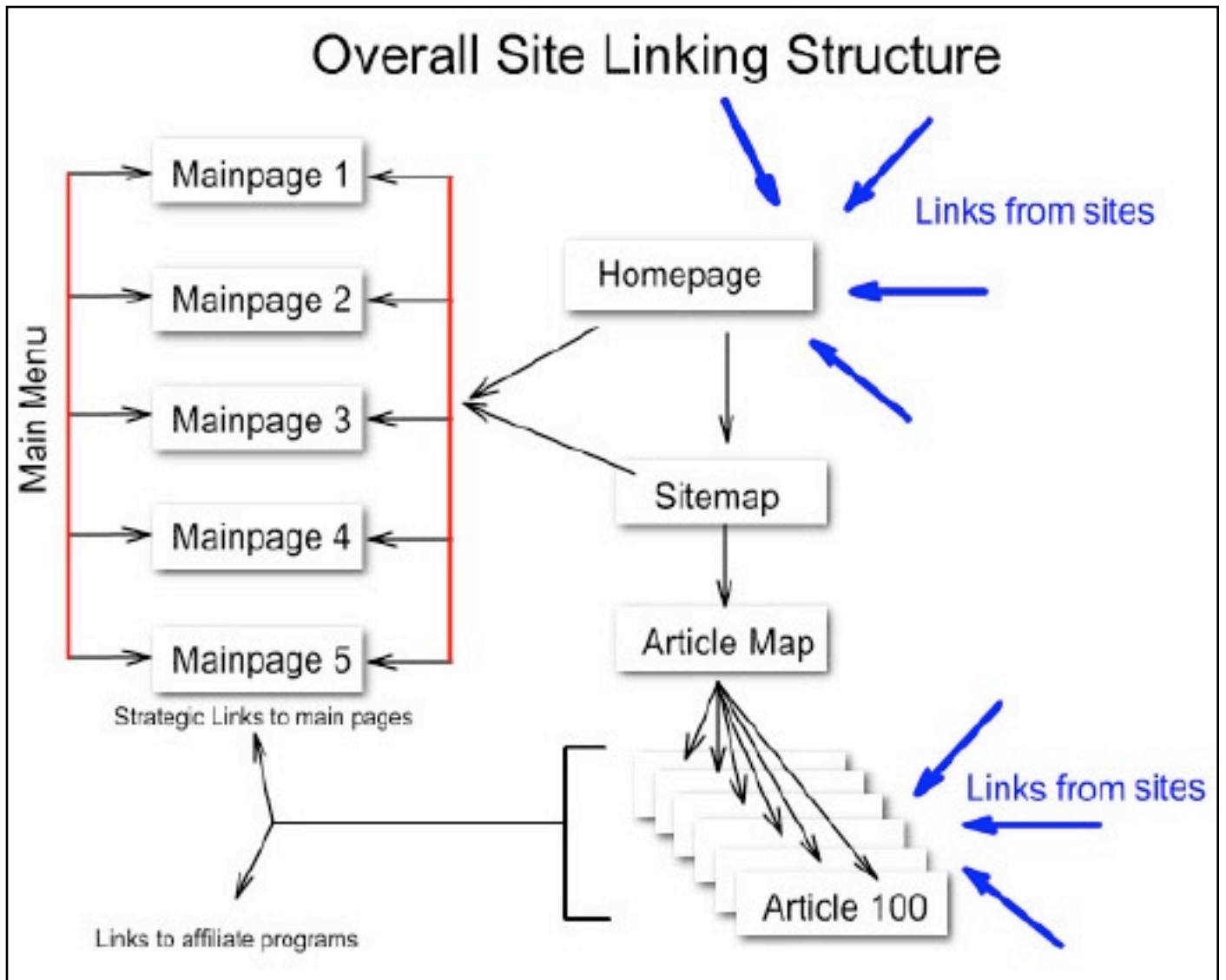


Fig. 24.1

The diagram above was provided by Dr. Andy Williams. If you prefer to start with a single site instead of a mininet, Dr. Williams SEO Website Builder Software is perfect for you. All you need to do is provide content. The software does the html code and linking for you. It also provides search engine advice.

[SEO Website Builder](http://www.cdzn.com/wsb) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wsb>

This style of site is very powerful in its ability to achieve top search engine rankings, if you've done your keyword research. The site design maximizes visibility of pages in the search engines and funnels important Page Rank and link Reputation to the most important pages of your site.

For more information, be sure to read this FREE unadvertised bonus report by Dr. Williams called, "Creating Niche Sites that Rank Well and Make Money."

[Free Niche Site Report](http://www.cdzn.com/nichesite.pdf) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/nichesite.pdf>

## The “Megasite” Linking Strategy

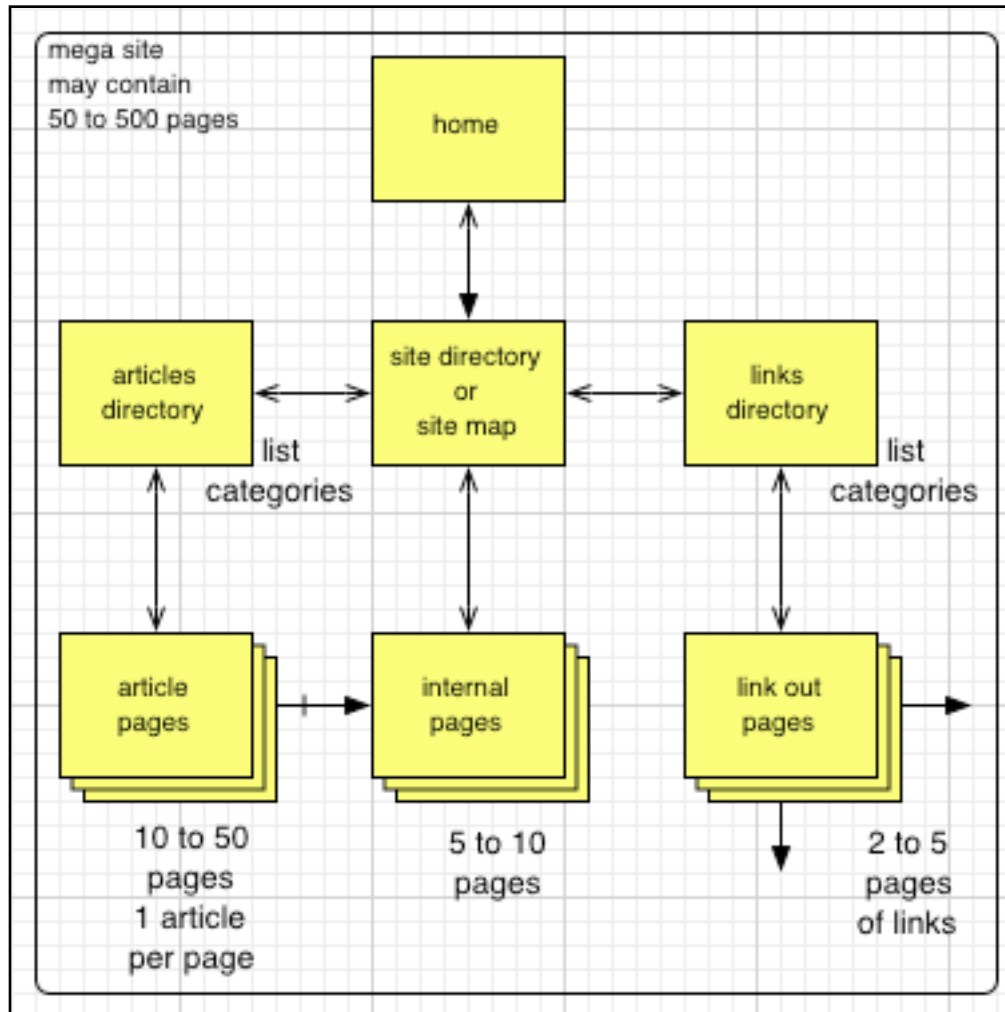


Fig. 25.1

Although not a minisite, the megasite creates a massive mininet within itself. It may contain upwards of 300 articles written by students. Give them a keyword set and a target density. Have them write between 200 to 800 words per article. Pay them piece work to amass a major collection of keyword rich documents that link back to your articles directory.

Along with the links directory, the article directory makes this site a giant hub. A universe of information on one central theme or topic. A site this big and focused is a natural search engine beauty and will usually outperform the competition in the listings, especially for generic keyword categories.

Rather than writing another ebook on how Megasites work, I'd like to point your attention to an excellent work on the subject by James Martell. It's called the "Affiliate Marketers Handbook" and gives exact details on how to set up a megasite just like the one above.

[Affiliate Marketers Handbook](http://www.cdzn.com/amh) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/amh>

# More Linking Strategies...

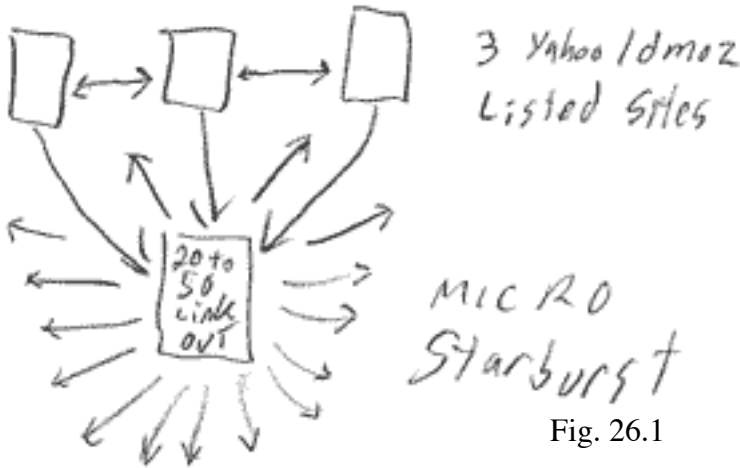


Fig. 26.1

Another useful linking strategy is that of the microsite. These are not doorway pages, nor are they minisites. They are long and wordy single page sites, linked together in an eclectic fashion like the basket below. All supporting sites are sacrificed as leverage, to support the search engine positioning and link popularity of the central theme site.

There is a work on the subject of microsites by Jay Stockwell called Micro Site Miracles. Instead of using a basket, Jay uses only a few incoming links, that link to a long wordy page, which in turn, explodes into dozens of outgoing links. This "micro starburst" concept works extremely well if you can get some decent incoming links to support it. Find out more about it by visiting his web site. [Micro Site Miracles](http://www.cdzn.com/msm) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/msm>

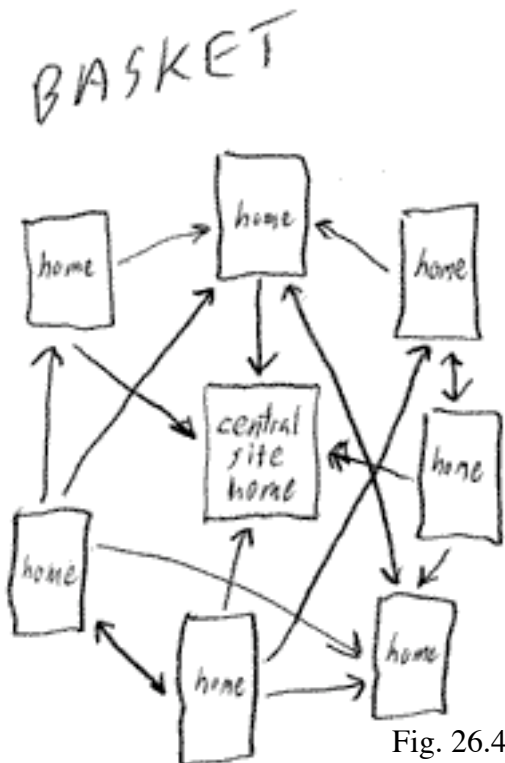


Fig. 26.4

eclectic mix of single pages  
central site does not link to supporting sites

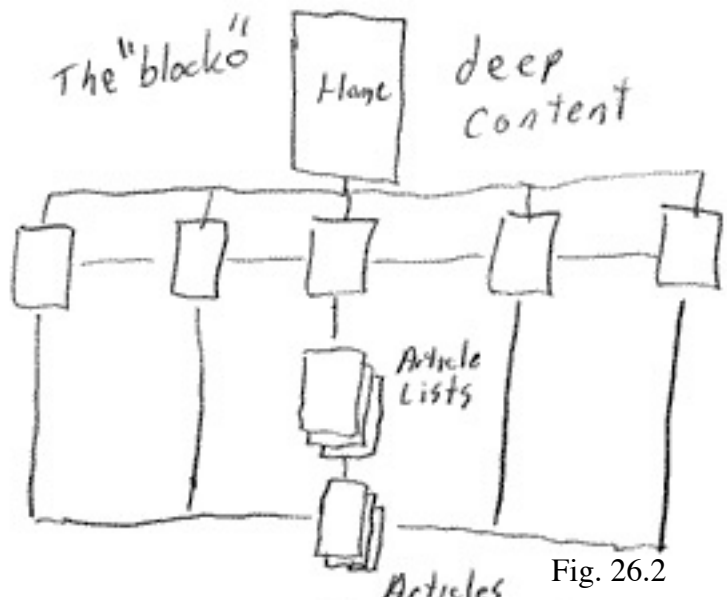
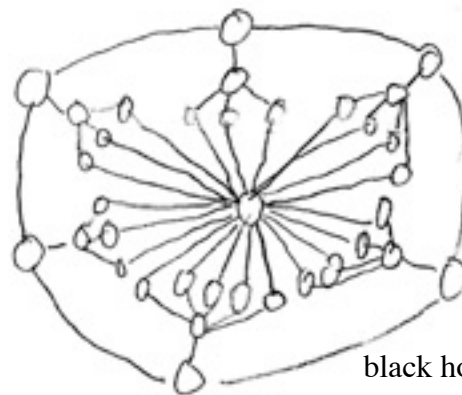


Fig. 26.2



black hole Fig. 26.3

## Keys to a building a successful mininet empire

Spread the hosting far apart in different geographical locations. This will ensure a wide variety of A, B and C class blocks in your IP addresses.

Having a wide variety of blocks makes it look like sites from all over the web are linking to each other, not just those on the same or nearly the same C class block. Having a variety of A B & C class IP blocks, will make it very difficult for the "web map filters" employed by some search engines, from detecting or penalizing your mininet.

It's good for the Advertiser or "Central blue site" to be on its own IP address. The surrounding minisites do not need to be on their own IP addresses. You can use shared IPs for the purpose of minisites, even adding free and very low cost hosting into the mix, like hostica.com and godaddy.com.

Hide the whois information by using a service like domainsbyproxy.com, (available through godaddy.com) when you register your domain names. Doing so will protect you from someone using [OptiLink](#) to reverse engineer your internet presence. It will also protect you from annoying domain based email spam. No one ever needs to know that you own the web sites in the mininet.

It's a good idea to register your domain names through an accredited registrar like godaddy.com instead of your hosting company. Many hosts attempt to tie you in to their hosting, or claim they own part of your domain name, or charge hefty fees if you ever want to change hosts.

Make sure you have 100% control over your domain names and all four contacts. They are the Registrant, Admin contact, Billing contact and Technical contact. Reputable companies like Melbourne IT, GoDaddy and Afternic give you access to, and the ability to change and modify all contact information.

If you own the Central site, another trick is to "spoof" an affiliate program, even if you don't have one. Think of it this way, what logical reason is there for a bunch of minisites to link to, and promote a destination? Affiliate revenue, that's why.

So if for some reason, you ever got into trouble with the search engines, your Central site would appear to have a "reason" for all these incoming links. If they went so far as to try and join your affiliate program, you could simply have a web page stating, "Sorry, we are not accepting any new affiliates at this time."

Provide as much information as possible on the internal pages of any minisite. Make sure it has real value to the reader, at least a 30 second read, so that it presells them as much as possible, getting them ready to make a purchase through an affiliate link, or at the Central site.

In other words, try and appeal directly to the emotion of the viewer by communicating direct benefits. If you have a gift basket, don't just have a picture of it. Describe what's in it. Explain the tastes and smells. The exotic sensations that await for the recipient. Include pictures of people smiling and happy. After all, isn't that the true meaning of giving a gift basket? That end result, bringing joy?

If you have long content pages inside your minisites, consider using anchor text links. The search engines will still consider them links, giving valuable points for including your keywords in link text.

In order to get immediate link popularity for your minisites, consider using an expired domain service. Every day, people are letting their domain names expire. After a short while, anyone can register these names for themselves.

Very often, these "expired domains" are listed in Yahoo, Dmoz and other important directories. These domain names have instant link popularity on their own, and assist the positioning of whatever you link them to. Just beware that the competition to snap up these expired domains is pretty fierce, and it may take several hours of trying to actually get one.

If you've acquired an expired domain that used to have high PR (PageRank), don't just redirect the domain to your main site. Google will see the redirect and reset the PR... at least that is what they've been doing over the past year or so. And I wouldn't create any low value "jump" pages or any other sort of "no content" redirect.

If it was me, I would put relevant content on a home page very quickly, within hours of acquiring the domain name, before Google has a chance to spider it again. I would use OptiLink to find out what the incoming links said (the page's former Reputation) and be sure your new content (the page's Topic) matches it's former Reputation.

[OptiLink HTML and Link Analysis Software](http://www.cdzn.com/opl) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/opl>

With off-page factors (incoming links) remaining the same, the only variables would be the on-page factors. My advice would be to reverse engineer the top 20 pages (again using OptiLink) to find the correct keyword density and keyword placement of the top scoring pages in your category.

By reverse engineering what's already there, you can be sure the incoming links are in agreement with the page content, semantics and keyword proximity of your competitors. Once the on-page factors have been adjusted, you could use this new home page to direct existing PR and traffic to where ever you want.

You could also try adding additional content to the domain as time permits, to at least make it resemble its former content. And once the content pages are done, join related affiliate programs and monetize the traffic.

Speaking of content, try and keep your affiliate web sites low maintenance. Do not include time sensitive information like copyright dates, time limited offers or specials. Do not include prices on your affiliate sites or anything else requiring constant changes.

One of the best tips for publishers designing affiliate minisites, is keeping them free of logos or company names. Not at all meaning proprietary makes and model numbers, but keep them free of the publisher or Central site's logos, unless you own the Central site and control its destiny.

For example, you might be promoting cellular accessories. Its ok to use nokia and 5160. What you want to avoid is mentioning 123cellular, or the name of the destination site where the purchase is made.

The reason being, that affiliate programs come and go. Advertisers shut off their affiliate programs without notifying you the publisher. Rather than having to scramble like mad, replacing logos and company names on dozens of pages, all you need to do is replace one advertiser's affiliate code with another.

Replacing code is a simple matter of doing a search and replace. Especially if you just switch to a different publisher within the same tracking system, such as cj.com.

If you use slick text software like BBEdit or UltraEdit, you can "grep" or search and replace all instances within nested folders on your hard drive. That means the links are updated in only a few seconds. All that remains is to FTP the changes up to your server.

## Conclusion

You now have the most powerful linking strategies available today. Please keep them secret and use them for good instead of evil ;-). Make sure each page you create adds value to the user experience, contains only relevant content and is worth at least a 30 second read. Doing so will keep you out of trouble, free from anyone accusing you of creating low value pages or spamming the search engines.

Here's to your success and prosperity. Enjoy the journey my friend. Before you know it, your earnings will go on auto pilot as you help put buyers and sellers together. All thanks to your new knowledge of linking strategies and the power of the mininet.

Oh, and congratulations to you my friend, for all your hard work. I wish you all the best. Now get to work. Diagram everything out. Choose your market. Choose your keywords. Make your minisites. Link them together in a mininet. Submit one site to the search engines. If all goes well, within a few weeks, you'll soon be making more money than you every dreamed possible.

***Michael Campbell***

P.S.

Be sure to read the following "Affiliate Revenue Strategies" interview, it contains some really great tips for finding niches, building top scoring web pages and monetizing the traffic. Oh, and don't forget to pick up your bonus materials, like Leslie Rohde's "Dynamic Linking" in the download area!

<http://www.revengeofthemininet.com/rev/>

**username: revenge**

**password: 10X88**

## **Bonus Interview - Affiliate Revenue Strategies**

*Hello, my name is Brian Maroevich. I'm President of Avalanche Response Marketing Systems and LeadStampede.com. Today I have a very special guest. I will be interviewing internet marketing and search engine guru, Michael Campbell. But first, let me give you a little introduction:*

*Michael is a search engine optimization specialist and top internet marketing consultant. He has written a step by step training system to online success in the book called Nothing but 'Net. It details how he generated over \$750,000 in internet revenues in less than a year, with no advertising costs, not even so much as a business card.*

*In addition to writing Nothing But 'Net, Michael has written two other ebooks; Clickin' it Rich - a home business training system and Revenge of the Mininet - linking strategies for affiliate revenue through search engine positioning.*

*As well as three ebooks Michael writes a newsletter called Internet Marketing Secrets. It's a free newsletter for people wanting to increase online sales and become better at internet marketing, permission email, affiliate programs and search engines.*

*Michael has also been involved in the conception and production of, several internet marketing and search engine optimization products, such as OptiLink, Search Engine Commando, Super Affiliate Cash Machine and three white papers on Search Engine Positioning.*

*Michael Campbell has a background in the graphic design and advertising. Online since 1986, he began using the internet in 1993 and was one of the first people to realize it was the most important communications revolution since Gutenberg's printing press.*

*Michael has served on several university and corporate advisory boards, given hands on training seminars, spoken at lectures and conferences. He is president and CEO of Dynamic Media Corporation and currently resides in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.*

*Without further adieu, here's Michael Campbell...*

***Hello Michael, thanks for taking the time today, we all really appreciate it!***

*Hello Brain, hello to all the listeners and readers, you're all very welcome! I'm glad to be here, very happy and excited about this latest project, "Revenge of the MiniNet."*

***Great, let's get started. Michael, maybe you could give us a little background on yourself.***

Sure, my professional background is in advertising, graphic design, printing, pre-press, website design and search engine optimization. It wasn't until a few years ago, around 1998, that I became a student of marketing.

Actually, in the beginning, back in the middle 1980's. I went to design school for desktop publishing. I graduated with degree in graphic design and communications. I graduated not only first in my class, but with the highest marks ever recorded by the school. This made me happy and confident. It also gave me the sense I was on the right track, doing something I loved to do.

After graduation, I thought I'd be designing glossy color corporate brochures. But as I soon found out, like anything else, you have to pay your dues first, and learn the craft from the ground up.

So, essentially, like a carpenter, in his first year of apprenticeship, he sweeps the floor; a bartender, his first year, he empties ashtrays; well, I did the graphic design equivalent. I spent one year typesetting.

***Typesetting? What a job that must have been.***

Yes, it was tough. I learned a lot of discipline. What it takes to satisfy clients. I learned a lot about design, what works, what doesn't, and why. Working with ad agencies and their designers was the best education I could get.

***An education in terms of advertising, or what?***

Yes, in terms of advertising and building consumer confidence. It all depends on the intended audience. For example, flyers are designed way differently than catalogs or annual reports.

I also learned what colors worked for what, and in what combinations. When and where to use graphic elements like starbursts. When to burst an ad out of its box and overflow it into the next box. What kind of type is formal type. What kind of type is chatty and very informal.

So, in creating the advertising collateral, doing everything from grocery store flyers, all the way up to corporate brochures, there's big differences in the overall look and feel.

Every element of graphic design affects the advertising message. The type, the colors, the layout, headlines, the ad copy and graphic elements are all super important in how they work in harmony together.

The clients were so impressed I eventually worked my way up to head in-house designer, and doubled as prepress manager for this huge multi million dollar printing company. I was responsible for all the computers, digital output, in-house design, and the humans that did all the work.

### ***So you have a firm foundation in the advertising field?***

Yes, five years at the printing plant working with ad agencies on a daily basis. Then after the printing days, is when I ventured into website design and search engine optimization (SEO) work. After doing SEO for about a year, I got rid of all the clients except one, a cellular client.

I promoted them on the internet for one year and made them three quarters of a million dollars in their first year of operation, with no advertising costs, not even so much as a business card.

After that success in 1999, I decided to share it and write my first ebook called "Nothing but 'Net." After that, I finally went to work for myself, fired all the clients, set up a home business, and decided to make a living through affiliate revenue alone.

[Nothing but 'Net](http://www.cdzn.com/nbn) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/nbn>

After I did affiliate thing for a year, I surprised myself by earning over \$208,000 in my first year. That's not gross, that was my commission, my take home pay. So based on that success, I decided to share my knowledge and wrote the "Clickin it Rich" ebook, as a complete home business and entrepreneurial training system.

[Clickin' it Rich](http://www.cdzn.com/cir) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/cir>

So as you can see, I've had a pretty balanced sales, marketing and design background. It seemed like I planned it that way, but really I didn't. I was fortunate that all my knowledge and experience seemed to be building in a linear - block by block - fashion, to lead where I am today.

### ***What brought you to the internet?***

That's a good question. The money's actually quite good in pre-press and desktop publishing. It's a really good career being a scanner operator or specializing in color correction. Even the junior employees can make \$50,000 a year when they start.

***Wow, that is good money for a trade job.***

Yes, so the usual question is, "Why leave a safe and stable job? Why go into debt setting up your own shop?"

Well, I saw many graphics leaving the printing plant. Everyone wanted their high resolution TIF and EPS graphic formats converted into low resolution JPG and GIF formats for the internet. I saw a definite market there, the internet was about to emerge as a new publishing medium.

As an experiment, I designed the printing company's web site along with Boris Chow, who was a high school practicum student at the time. Turns out I really liked creating web pages and writing the ad copy.

I really enjoyed the sense of freedom. No longer did freedom of the press belong to those who own one, now anyone could publish on the world wide web, and it was free. (Less the cost of hosting of course.)

In the beginning I nearly lost my shirt competing with all the other designers out there. There was a lot of low bids and it was really brutal making a living from web design. If you had a computer and web page editor, you could call yourself a, "designer."

For a few years there, everything about traditional graphic design was forgotten. That's why there were and still are, so many poorly designed and hard to navigate sites out there.

After struggling and going into personal debt over \$5,000 I gave up designing websites. I finally discovered the search engines. I got good at optimizing web sites so they would naturally score high in the search engines, so that my clients would get found first.

My slogan was something like, "If you're first to get found, you'll get first chance to make the sale." One of my SEO clients ended up getting NASA - the space agency - as a customer.

***Was search engine optimization just trial and error, or did you study?***

Well, it was a little bit of trial and error, but I also read everything I could find at the time. Other than Planet Ocean's Winning the Search Engine Wars, there were not a whole lot of search engine publications back in those days.

[Winning the Search Engine Wars](http://www.cdzn.com/pob) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/pob>

I started noticing patterns in the pages that did score well. Then I started replicating that success, optimizing and running a whole bunch of experiments

on my own. That led to SEO as a career move and the rest - as they say - is history. I was one of the first professional SEOs.

### ***And you took on a lot of clients for Search Engine Optimization?***

In the beginning, yes, I had dozens and dozens of clients. They all wanted to know, "How long will it take me to get to the top of the search engines? How long will I stay there? How much traffic can I expect?"

It's almost like having to be a magician and cater to each client's specific goals. For me it was too much pressure, and too much stress, I didn't want to do it anymore.

I let my fitness schedule and diet slide. I worked constantly under stressful situations. I spent so much time trying to get the next client. Billing the clients. Trying to collect the invoices over 60 days old. Not to mention driving around town doing lunches, meetings, presentations, lawyers, contracts.... arg, I had enough already.

I wanted to fire all the clients and do affiliate marketing, where I'm the boss, I own the pages, and I'm in total control of my own destiny.

So now I don't answer to anyone but myself and live the lifestyle that I want. If one affiliate program goes down or offline, I simply switch my traffic to another one, without missing a beat.

No more clients. No more headaches. No more commutes. No more stress. Now I just work from home. Besides providing coaching for my readers, researching and writing my newsletter, I concentrate solely on affiliate marketing. Yippee!

### ***What exactly is the definition of affiliate marketing?***

Very loosely it just means that I get a commission if I sell your stuff. Simply put, it's performance based compensation for my marketing efforts.

I go to your website and fill out a simple "application" form. You approve me and I'm now an affiliate, a salesperson for your stuff.

You give me piece of tracking code in the form of a hypertext link. I put the link into my web pages, newsletters, classified ads, emails, etc, and try to convince my visitors to click on it.

Visitors click on the link from my site and end up shopping at your site. If they buy anything, the tracking code does its magic. I get a sales commission (for bringing the two of you together) and you get the sale and fulfillment.

### ***You hear a lot about associate marketing. Is that the same deal?***

Essentially affiliate marketing and associate marketing are the same thing. I think the phrase "affiliate marketing" or "affiliate program" was patented or trademarked or something like that. So everyone needed to call it something else for a while.

Purists will say that affiliate marketing means you become a member of the advertiser's site. Whereas associate marketing is a stronger, more formal term meaning to join as a partner or ally.

To me, both affiliate marketing and associate marketing mean the same thing, performance based marketing. Commissions are paid on some form of action by the customer, like a sign up, filling out a form, requesting information, or an actual sale of a product or service.

### ***How did affiliate marketing start on the internet?***

Most people credit Amazon but they were not the first. They certainly made affiliate programs more popular than they were. But aside from them, there were many smaller companies and independent marketers that were paying commissions on product sales.

Another pioneer was the Active MarketPlace, which included mentors of mine like Declan Dunn and Patrick Anderson. Declan wrote two ebooks about affiliate revenue that were years ahead of their time.

Declan sold the ebooks through an affiliate program, so that anyone who sold them made an affiliate commission.

It was rather bizarre from a selling standpoint, people selling it used affiliate marketing to make a commission, on a book that told people how to do affiliate marketing and make a commission.

That previous paragraph really does make sense, if you read it twice. It's like selling a picture of a picture.

But it was Amazon that really made affiliate programs the force they are today. I believe it was Amazon that actually trademarked or patented several parts of the affiliate sales process.

***Did Amazon really drive sales with the affiliate marketing? Is that how they grew? Or was it just a small percentage?***

Well, from what I remember, Amazon's affiliate marketing was everything for them in the very beginning. It was amazing, the amount of people that dedicated entire websites to them. They set up stores to buy books, CDs, electronic goods, and just about everything else.

***So, it really exploded their business?***

Yes it exploded their business. It also exploded a lot of people's pocketbooks, because they were getting commissions on so many things.

But it's largely a non-issue these days, because - when it comes to buying books online - most people type Amazon.com directly into their browsers. So for the affiliate, it's not the money maker it once was.

Most affiliates are focusing on more specialized target markets these days. The more narrow the niche, the tighter the website focus, the easier it is to compete, and the more likely you are to succeed.

***So, a lot of businesses right now, could actually use affiliate marketing to promote their sites. And they could see exceptional growth?***

Oh, definitely. People always ask me about hiring SEO companies to improve their search engine positioning. My usual reply is, "Why would you want to hire only one company for promoting your site, when you could have dozens or even hundreds?"

It's the simplest way to get several SEO types, websites and newsletter publishers working for you. Start an affiliate program. If you make ebooks try clickbank.com. If you ship physical goods, try CJ.com.

Once you are set up to pay a decent commission on sales, people will sign up in droves to sell your stuff. Let them do the SEO work, while you sit back doing the shipping and servicing the customers they bring.

***Okay. So, let's say I want to join a few affiliate programs and start selling stuff on the web. What does one need in terms of computers and programs to start making money with affiliate programs?***

Not much. I've seen people do it with as little as an email address, basic dial up and a modest computer. Of course, people who are serious about it and do it for a living, have the best tools available.

Most people start with a page layout program that makes the html web pages for them. There's Mozilla - a free download - from <http://www.mozilla.org>. Or you can buy software like Dreamweaver, or GoLive, to do the same thing.

Then - if you want to go beyond the basics - you'll need hosting, which doesn't have to be expensive, a buck a month at [hostica.com](http://hostica.com). And you'll need some FTP software (to transfer pages from your hard drive to your hosting company). That's all the FTP software does, and there's plenty of free ones available like Cute FTP. (Note: Most modern html software - including the free Mozilla - have built it FTP abilities so you don't need separate software.)

You might also want to add suped up notebook software, or something to keep track of all your various passwords, what affiliate programs you've joined, what the tracking codes are, and what pages you have linking to where. That's another big deal, especially for beginners, is to keep organized and maintain records of all that stuff.

That's pretty much all you "need" in terms of software and hardware. But usually, people end up buying all sorts of tools to help them automate various time consuming processes. I've included a resource section at the end of the ebook. It lists all the tools that I use and recommend.

***Is there any limit to how much money you can make when using affiliate programs? And how much can one expect to earn their first year with affiliate programs? Is it just based on your equipment and software, or personal drive?***

That's a tough one to answer. But the key issue, is the drive and focus of the individual. It depends on the willingness to learn and determination of the individual to succeed.

I've seen people copy and paste their way to over \$100,000 their first year, without knowing anything about html, or page layout. I've also seen people struggle away for years, not really doing anything.

And that's the key. To take action. To make mistakes and learn from them. To get better at it - doesn't matter what - by practicing it. Some people are so paralyzed by fear that they never do anything. They just collect and hoard information without ever acting on it.

I keep trying to encourage people, not to give up. You get good at something by doing it, over and over, until it becomes second nature. A motor skill that's hard wired to the brain. How much an individual earns, is entirely up to them.

***So, you don't have to be a sophisticated computer person, or even well-educated. You can just go right in, start experimenting and making commissions?***

Yes, that's right. Some of the people who are earning the most money now, had occupations like students, secretaries, truck drivers, carpenters, plumbers and yoga instructors.

Also, many stay-at-home, full time moms make good money from affiliate programs. Several I know, make more money than I do. They find it an excellent way to use the computer and earn extra income, while staying at home with the kids.

Some people don't even learn how to use an HTML editor like FrontPage, GoLive or Dreamweaver. They just use templates from the web, or use software like Dr. Andy Williams SEO Website Builder. Then they just add content or paste in text from their word processor. So some people, with only the most basic knowledge, can still earn a very good living from the internet.

[Dr. Andy Williams Website Builder](http://www.cdzn.com/wsb) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wsb>

***So, what should one consider in an affiliate program before they join?***

Well, number one, make sure that there's an existing market for the product or service. That's the biggest concern. You don't want to create a product and then look for a market. You want to make sure that there's plenty of existing traffic and sales going on for that product or service.

The second one, is that it has to be consumable, or get used up in a reasonable amount of time. Some favorites include items like vitamins, prescription drugs, herbal remedies, golf balls, cosmetics, food, candles, filters, ink, toner, paper, etc... anything that has a limited life span.

***Well, that's interesting. Now, what about books and manuals and things like that?***

For how-to manuals, yes. There's always a good market for those kinds of things. Info products like ebooks on weight loss, well-being, dieting and exercise also do well.

So do self help ebooks like quitting smoking, how to buy a car, or anything else you might be too embarrassed to buy in the real world. But, as for printed books, DVDs and CDs, again... most people go directly to Amazon, or the mall to buy those things.

Another thing I would consider is the profit margin. It has to be high enough to justify doing the work. What I mean is, a piece of professional music gear - like a reverb unit - might be selling for \$1,000. If you get a 10 percent commission, that's \$100 bucks on every sale. Compare that to something like pimple cream, where you only get .30 cents per tube that you sell.

***Do they really have affiliate programs for that kind of thing?***

Oh, sure, sure. There's affiliate programs for almost everything you can imagine. If you set up a site on pimple cream, you could leverage that traffic and present them with high end solutions, like expensive cosmetics, beauty secrets books, home facial kits, salon retreats and more.

**So, how would one actually research product demand, or test the market to see if there's a need for a certain product?**

That question can be answered with two simple rules.

Rule #1

It must be commonly searched terms or items.

The beginning of any internet marketing campaign starts with keywords. They are the key to finding a niche and key to making profits. People have to be looking for the keywords on a consistent basis.

There also needs to be relatively little competition for the keywords. In other words, lots of searches but few web pages to satisfy those searches. This is the low hanging fruit of the internet and the easiest to pick. It is the fastest way to get an affiliate pay check.

Never compete for one word or two word phrase if it is a very generic term. Research has shown that people using very general terms are likely to be gathering information. People using specific terms are likely to be shoppers.

Rule #2

Solve the problem of the common person and super niche it.

All you need is a single clue. Look around your room to find things in common with everyone else on the planet. We all need to eat, wear clothes, and need a place to live and sleep.

Many of us have pets, hobbies, sports and family activities in common with each other. Maybe you can do something with keywords involving the bed, quilt, pillow cases or the mattress itself. What about the kitchen table or stuff inside the kitchen?

Look around your house and outside your door. What about posters for the kids room? What about summer activities like camping or swimming. What about hot weather clothing like t-shirts and bathing suits?

These are just a few ideas. Like I mentioned before, all you need is a clue. The next thing we need is actual proof of need and market. (Always bring a product to an existing market, never the other way round.) Thanks to the internet, we can use software like Wordtracker or Nichetracker to help us find out if there is a market.

Note that you can't use Overture's free search term suggestion tool to find markets. It only shows you searches relative to each other, meaning which keywords are more popular than others. It does not tell you the most important part of the equation. It doesn't tell you how many competing pages there are for any given keyword phrase.

To answer the competing pages question, and find the low hanging fruit, we need tools like Wordtracker or Niche Tracker.

[NicheBot](http://www.cdzn.com/nbt) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/nbt>

[Wordtracker](http://www.cdzn.com/wtr) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wtr>

After looking around my room, I came up with some clues. I fired up Nichetracker and typed in some very simple root words like: table, cat, recipes, football, ice, play, stove, t-shirt, water and poster.

With a mere 10 minutes of research, I identified more than twenty niche items with very few competing web pages. Just look at these great niche phrases...

Curtain rods, stained glass sun catchers, gas catalytic heaters, softball catchers masks, picnic table plans, dolphin table runners, broccoli and cheese recipes, nike football gloves, rocky road icecream, kenmore icemakers, baseball player pictures, maytag stove parts, ventless gas stoves, wildlife animal t-shirts, waterproof laminate flooring, water resistant speakers, water bed pumps, water hose nozzles, posters of johnny depp, posters of pitbulls, botticelli poster and harry potter 3 posters.

Almost all of these items have affiliate programs associated with them and would make excellent choices for niche affiliate revenue sites. Some of these search phrases have less than 100 competing pages. Some have less than 10.

Even with a little SEO knowledge from the TNT Guide, Stomping the Search Engines or with the help of SEO Site Builder, almost anyone could achieve top spot for these keyword phrases on the search engines. And remember, this research took less than 10 minutes with Nichetracker.

[TNT \(Totally Non-Technical Guide\)](http://www.cdzn.com/tnt) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/tnt>

[Stomping the Search Engines](http://www.cdzn.com/stp) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/stp>

You can do the same thing with Wordtracker. John Alexander has written an excellent book "Wordtracker Magic" on how to mine gold from the comprehensive Wordtracker search. Either tool works wonders and will tell you exactly where the niche markets are.

[Wordtracker Magic](http://www.cdzn.com/wtm) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wtm>

Just remember that in Wordtracker, the higher the KEI number the better. Nichetracker is the opposite. When using its Keyword Research Tool (KRT) the lower the Ratio number the fewer competing pages.

All of the keyword phrases in the list above served dual purpose. They are commonly searched products and they are super niche items. Any one of those phrases would make excellent mininet material, a direct response page, or simply an ad that leads to an affiliate program.

With tools like Nichetracker, you don't even need a single web page. You can find niche keywords with few competing pages, find affiliate programs for those keywords, then use Google Adwords to drive search engine traffic directly to their sales letters.

You can also do split run A/B tracking to test the clickthroughs and response of your advertising. This allows you to keep honing your ads with laser like precision for maximum clicks and sales. You can even put up a pre-selling page without needing a separate hosting company.

If you choose to go the mininet route instead of paying for advertising, all the niche phrases mentioned above would make excellent mininets. If you were to focus one site on nothing but different makes and models of camping stoves, it would be a natural fit to lead to a site of lanterns, a site of sleeping bags and a site of tents... which leads back to the stoves.

Simply link the ring of sites together using the Butterfly or Matrix as described in Revenge of the Mininet. And at the risk of sounding like a broken record, don't forget to monetize everything on your sites.

On your ring of camping equipment sites, put up banners, various size ads, and contextual links that generate additional affiliate revenue. Put up colorful ads on camping related topics like dehydrated food, links to water purification systems, ads for RV rentals... monetize every inch of ad space on your camping related ring of content sites.

So now it doesn't matter how people leave your site. It can be an ad, banner, contextual link, or the actual content. No matter how they leave, you'll make money. And that's what we want right? Repeat after me, monetize everything!

Easy money in the dirt world, has always been about finding a market and positioning yourself in the middle of the existing revenue stream. On the internet, it's as simple as finding heavily searched keywords with few competing pages. That's it.

All that's left to do is get the traffic. Whether you pay for the ads, use SEO Website Builder, or set up a mininet for organic search engine listings is up to you. Once you have your niche, the rest comes easy.

Another research tip - I learned from marketing guru Jim Edwards - uses Overture. You still do the keyword search as previously described, but then you take a second look at the Overture bids. The point being that there may be a lot of traffic, but no one has figured out how to monetize that traffic.

To do this second half of the keyword research, use the Overture search engine to search for your keyword of choice. Then check to see how much money is getting bid per click. If it's a few pennies, its not a good market, no one is monetizing the traffic. If its a few bucks, then obviously someone is figuring out how to profit on those expensive clicks.

You'll want to visit these top bidding sites to see what kind of sales process they have. What their sites look like. How they convert a visitor into a customer. You'd do well to include some of their processes into your own sites.

### ***So a little market research will make the most money?***

Oh, definitely! Like I said, do your research first. Make sure there's a market for the product. Make sure your prospects have disposable income and are willing to pay for the product.

The last thing to take into consideration, is make sure the place you're driving your traffic, passes your close personal inspection. Bottom line, ask yourself, would you shop there?

Take a good hard look at the advertiser's site. Is it clean? Is it well designed? Does it come up fast? Is it easy to navigate? Can you find what you want within three mouse clicks? Do you trust them? Do they make you feel confident about your purchase decision?

***And make sure its easy to order?***

Sure! Exactly! All that stuff. Take everything into consideration. And make sure that they pass your inspection, that you, yourself, would shop there. If you don't feel confident and comfortable about shopping there, neither will the traffic that you send there.

***Are most companies pretty reliable in paying out commissions?***

Yes, I've found that most of them are. Of course there's always exceptions to the rule. Companies go out of business, get sold or change their business models, often without telling or consulting their affiliate sales force. Those commissions are usually lost forever.

There are lots of good affiliate networks like, [cj.com](http://cj.com), [linkshare.com](http://linkshare.com), [performics.com](http://performics.com), [clickbank.com](http://clickbank.com), which contain hundreds, if not thousand of different products.

Then there are individual programs that belong to each site like [match.com](http://match.com), [allposters.com](http://allposters.com). To find individual programs like these ones, just search Google with your product, followed by affiliate program in quotes. For example, if you were interested in setting up food sites for affiliate revenue, search for: "affiliate programs".

If you are considering an affiliate program where you have to deal with the advertiser directly, just be cautious and do your "due diligence" on any company that you intend on partnering with.

You might also consider asking about the reputation of the company in the various affiliate forums and newsgroups. Try phoning and emailing the advertiser and see how you are treated. If they are good to you as a stranger, they'll probably be good to you as their salesperson.

***Wow, that's a lot of information. Can we step back for a moment, before we move on, and have you summarize the most important things to consider before joining an affiliate program?***

Sure, these are some of the most important points to remember:

- Do your keyword research to find a low competition niche.
- Make sure there is an existing market for the product or service.
- It must be consumable or get used up in a reasonable amount of time.
- It must have a high enough profit margin to justify doing all the work.
- Make sure the place you are driving your traffic passes inspection.
- Bottom line, ask yourself, would you shop there? Take a good hard look at the advertiser's site. Is it clean? Does it come up fast? Is it easy to navigate? Can you find what you want within three mouse clicks.

That's generally everything I take into consideration before joining any affiliate program, or joint venture.

***Let's say I'm an established business. How can I start an affiliate program to increase profits? Can you give an example?***

I get asked this question almost daily. It usually comes in the form of, "How much do you charge for search engine optimization work?"

The usual answer is returned in the form of a question. Why would you want only one person, or one Michael Campbell doing your optimization work, when you could have dozens, or hundreds, or thousands of people like him, doing optimization work for you?

They usually go, yes! How can I get 100 Michael Campbell's doing our SEO work and selling our stuff? The answer is simple, set up an affiliate program and offer a generous commission to affiliates who want to sell your stuff.

In addition, make sure your web site is easy to use. Make sure people can find things and you've made it easy to buy.

And don't make the potential affiliate go through some lengthy approval process. Just accept everyone that wants to join. You never know who they are, or how good they may be at selling. What I mean is, why wouldn't any established business want as many sales people as possible, for any given product or service?

So, yes, I think any business would be out of their mind, if they don't set up an affiliate program. Why just pay a dozen in-house sales people, when you could be paying thousands of internet salespeople? So, for me, I it

just makes good business sense to set up an affiliate program for any product or service. It's not that hard to do, but the impact on your bottom line can be enormous. Some companies have reported a ten fold increase in sales, simply by enrolling an affiliate sales force.

***So, whether I'm selling musician's gear to vitamins to whatever, I can set up an affiliate program to pay out commissions to other people to sell my products?***

Yes, exactly! It's one of the best business examples ever created. Instead of you trying to get customers, you can simply look after maintaining the ones your affiliates bring in. You can spend your energy on creating better ads, banners, buttons and tools for your affiliates to use.

***And is it easy to establish something like that?***

Oh, definitely! There's lots of affiliate program software out there. You can either rent it, buy it, or program your own.

If you sell digital products like ebooks and software, the fastest way to get an affiliate program up and running, and take credit cards for payment, is through Clickbank.com. Read the step by step instructions on their site. It only takes a few minutes.

But in a nutshell, all you need to do, is provide them with the location of two web pages. One is your sales letter, or the web page that contains the "buy now" order links. The second is your "thank you for ordering" page that contains download links, so customers can save the product to their computer.

Clickbank is only \$50 to set up an account. It's so cheap. Yet they act as your payment processor for Visa, Mastercard, online checks and the like. They take the customer's money, provide fraud protection, issue refunds, have real-time online tracking, provide sales reporting and more.

Clickbank also pays you and your sales person after they apply their very low processing fee. The sales person gets their 50% affiliate commission. (Or whatever percentage you agreed to pay them.) You get the remainder.

[Clickbank Information](http://www.cdzn.com/cbn) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/cbn>

In addition to clickbank.com for small companies selling digital goods, there's cj.com for large companies, myaffiliateprogram.com for average sized companies, there's groundbreak.com and many others. Just search for "affiliate program software" you'll get an idea of how many are out there. But those four are pretty much the best I've found.

But generally, if you handle physical inventory, it means doing a bit of work, giving every item on your website a little code, so that the code tracks all the way from the beginning of the process to the end of the process, so that you know who made the sale, and how much commission to pay out.

***That sounds like it could be time-consuming, based on the number of products. But would you say it's worth it for a business to at least test it and track if their sales increase?***

Definitely, yes. I know it's an investment in time. If you have a large inventory, it might even take a couple of months, before you're ready to announce your affiliate program.

But once you do announce your program, all of a sudden, you'll go from just you working - for yourself - in the search engines, to hundreds, if not thousands of people, suddenly passionate about selling your stuff for you.

If you use software like myaffiliateprogram.com it allows you to use your own domain name and passes through link popularity and Page Rank from the affiliates. Just think of all the incoming links to your site and how popular they will make you. Your search engine positioning will just take off. It's amazing!

[My Affiliate Program Information](http://www.cdzn.com/tap) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/tap>

***So, how do you actually get other people interested in selling your products and services, using affiliate programs?***

There's all sorts of affiliate directories and announcing places. I think AffiliateAnnounce.com is one of them. For a small fee, they'll take care of the announcements and entering your site into the affiliate directories.

Other people tell newsletter writers, like me. They simply tell me what it is that they have. If I think there's a fit for my readership, and it's a good product, I'll let my readers know about it.

Or, if you launch your affiliate program using a network like cj.com, they do a certain amount of promotion for you. They will post you on their site as a new advertiser and include you in their search engine.

Then, as a publisher, when I log into the CJ site, I'll find you and all the other advertisers that have joined the network within the past week. You'll also come up on any matching keyword searches.

Yet another way, is to take out small classified ads in ezines with large circulations. All you really need to do is capture the attention of a couple of super affiliates, they'll announce it to their lists, and the rest of the internet will notice and start selling your stuff... that simple.

There's even software out that will help you find these super affiliates. It's called the Success Spider and comes with a 30 page ebook, on how to approach these busy people, and it even tells you the right things to say.

[Internet Success Spider](http://www.cdzn.com/iss) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/iss>

In addition to the Success Spider, more and more "affiliate finder" software is coming onto the market. The best one - in my opinion - is like a swiss army knife, it does so many other things besides finding super affiliates. It's called SEO Elite. It lets you find valuable, high Page Rank link partners. Know exactly why they rank so well. And know everything about their linking strategy.

It will also tell you where your website is ranked for any search term. Monitor your link partners. Prevent linking to banned sites. And finds super affiliates willing to promote your products.

It also helps get and maintain high search engine rankings And if that's not enough, they've got free videos on their web site, showing why one site ranks higher than another.

[SEO Elite](http://www.cdzn.com/set) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/set>

So, depending on who you partner with, and the way that you go about advertising your affiliate program, you could get a lot of sellers - or publishers as they're known - very quickly. Remember, if you sell an ebook or digital product, 50 bucks gets you set up on clickbank.com, along with an affiliate program in less than 48 hours.

### ***How can a beginner start making money with affiliate programs? Can you give an example?***

The easiest way is to set up a simple web site on a topic you're passionate about. Something you love doing. Something you won't burn out on. Something that you've enjoyed all your life.

Personally, I prefer to set up several minisites of 5 to 10 pages each and link them all together. Other people set up giant 100 page sites. Others set up individual pages. It all depends on your personal preference.

Then join an affiliate network like cj.com or clickbank.com. Both of them have thousands of advertisers and thousands of products you can sell. Choose those that match the topic of your site and start weaving the affiliate links into your website's content.

The other important thing is to use an email database like AWeber Systems and start collecting email addresses right from the start. When someone joins your mailing list, send them an email right away and keep the relationship going with followup emails every two or three weeks.

[AWeber Opt-In Bulk Mailer & Autoresponder](http://www.cdzn.com/aws) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/aws>

***What kinds of products and services are selling well on the internet, especially through affiliate programs?***

Most of the big markets like printed books, DVDs and CDs are gone. Most people just go directly to Amazon to buy those items these days.

Hot services are jobs and employment related, like headhunting and recruitment. They're paying out a buck or two per lead that you send them. Usually it means getting someone to post their resume at the job site, or signing up an employer who wants to use the job site to find employees.

Another one is insurance quotes. One company is paying three bucks per lead. All they want is a person's name and for them to fill out a form. And that's not even for a sale. That's just a lead.

Personal ads and dating type services also continue to do very well. That includes introduction services, both domestic and international.

Other good money makers include consumables, like food and gift baskets, smoked salmon, nuts and edible gift items. Also huge are consumables like prescription drugs, herbal remedies, dietary supplements and vitamins.

Products that do well include anything consumable or electronic. Electronic products like cell phones, camera phones, remote control cars, planes and blimps, musicians gear, MP3 players, digital cameras, pocket computers, and of course my favorite thing of all...

***And what would that be?***

Batteries.

### ***Batteries? You're kidding.... are you serious?***

Yea, how lame is that? There's nothing exciting about batteries. But think about it. Look around your room. Everything from cell phones, to cordless phones, to laptop computers, palm devices, portable games, video and digital cameras, all need batteries. Expensive batteries.

Then there's things like watches and clocks, rice cookers, slow cookers, desktop computers, wireless microphones, remote controls... a lot of these things use hard to find button style lithium batteries. Again, not cheap.

Batteries are all around us and get used up. Then in the case of mobile phones, there's the need for the spare battery and the stand alone charger. Because while you're charging one battery, you're using the other battery in the device.

So, probably the biggest sale after the initial purchase, is after people come home with their digital camera, and the built-in battery, they go, "Oh, jeez, I need another battery, so I can continue using my camera while the other one is charging."

Very often, these same products that need batteries have many accessories available like protective cases, bags, tripods, lenses, memory sticks, tapes, software.... the consumable list for these products are endless. That's why the electronics market is so huge.

### ***So, you can compete against the big companies, because you can become an affiliate for a lot of price sensitive products? And actually make a sale, even if it's a commodity like batteries?***

Oh, yea, you can compete with anybody, because you can make web sites that are focused on just one particular item. The web site can be laser like in focus, selling accessories and batteries for one particular make and model number of product. Sites like this often score super high in search engine rankings, due to their narrow focus.

Then take five of these - what I call - minisites, each super focused on a different make and model number and link them together. Within weeks, depending on how well you optimized your pages, you should be coming up in the search results for all of your search terms.

***I'm sure there's a couple of people thinking, "Once this information gets out, everyone's going to be doing it." Is that a possibility? Or does it not matter, because you can always sell another product and find a niche market?***

Exactly. There's just so many different things out there to sell. If you do your keyword research correctly, you'll find hundreds of untapped niches in any given product category.

***And a lot of people won't do anything, anyway, right?***

Well, exactly. It takes a certain amount of discipline and entrepreneurial spirit. It takes drive, determination and the desire to make it work.

And it needs to be something that you're passionate about, as well. No passion, leads to distraction. No focus leads to no sales. If you're passionate about something, you'll enjoy the process, not just the destination.

It could be something you know a lot about, like a hobby. What was your greatest accomplishment? Was it quitting smoking, making a dress, building a house, decorating a wedding cake?

Have you ever solved a problem? You could sell the solution. With millions of internet users world wide, chances are, tens of thousands of people have had the same problem. They would rather buy the solution than figure it out on their own.

***Okay. So, if I'm passionate about drums, for example, I might want to focus in that area, and look for consumables in that area? Like drumsticks and drumheads. Is that how I should think as an affiliate?***

Yes, but be more specific in your website optimization and search phrases. Try something like Zildjian 18" cymbal, or Ludwig kick drum pedal, or Pearl tom skins. Be very specific and targeted on the web pages themselves.

***And then the actual product number. It's like PX3R, or whatever. You want to make sure to get that in.***

Exactly, for the video camera, tune the web page for Sony TRV-900, or the microphone, Apex 450 tube microphone, or for the mixing board Tascam US-428. The musicians know what these things are, and do very specific searches.

Some of these items might cost \$1,000 and you can make up to a ten percent commission. Not bad eh? Make \$100 just by simply bringing together, the person doing the search, and the merchant wanting the sale.

***So, you want to mention the specific product name, and a detailed description of the product, right on the web page? And then also in the html code?***

Yes, exactly, put the make and model number in the title tag, in the actual URL if possible, in headline text on the page, in links leading to the page, and mention it sprinkled liberally throughout the content of the page. You'll find out that once you do get that traffic, you'll end up converting a lot of it.

***That's brilliant! Focus on makes and model numbers of consumable items. I think a lot of people right now are using music affiliate programs, but they try to compete for drums, or try to optimize for drums, and not be more specific. No wonder why they're not getting a lot of people to visit their affiliate web sites.***

***That actually brings me to the next question. I'm an affiliate and set up a web site. How many different and efficient ways can I drive traffic to my website?***

There are endless possibilities when it comes to getting traffic. Basically it means putting your website on everything you can. Business cards, magnetic car signs, vanity license plates, paint it on the side of your building, print it on t-shirts, trade show booths, stickers, plastic bags, you name it. Just plaster it everywhere you can.

Put it on every email you send. Submit it to the major search engines. And don't forget to submit your site to the local and national directories, online yellow pages, and any other directory or guide that will accept it. Every incoming link - except link farms - will help.

There's also paid advertising in classifieds, periodicals, magazines, ezines, newsletters. There's paid search engine inclusion, pay per click search engines, pay to advertise ON the search engines, a pretty endless list actually.

***So, how do you weed out the wheat from the chaff there? What are the best ways to drive traffic? Let's say, free and low cost versus high cost. Or organic free search listings versus pay per click?***

For me, the best way to drive traffic has always been with free search engines. Can't beat the price. The only thing it takes is an investment in yourself. To buy a couple of ebooks on optimization. Learn what they teach and apply what you've learned to your sites.

For raw beginners there's the Totally Non-Technical Guide:

[TNT Guide](http://www.cdzn.com/tnt) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/tnt>

Or if you're like me and prefer listening to audio there's Stomping:

[Stomping the Search Engines](http://www.cdzn.com/stp) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/stp>

Some people though, don't like playing the free search engine game. They find it too time consuming and volatile, as optimization rules change all the time. They prefer to get traffic by other means. They'd rather pay for advertising and be done with it.

On the low cost end, I know one girl that sells through classified ads and ezine ads only. She drives the traffic to a single web page, which only contains a couple of paragraphs. All she has to do is convince the reader to click on her affiliate links. She rely's on the advertiser's site to finish the job and close the sale for her.

So, it's a very simple matter. She puts an emotional ad in an ezine. Readers click on it. They go and read the two paragraphs on her website. They click on the link at the bottom and end up shopping at the destination site.

### ***And that's it, huh? She's making money doing that?***

Oh, yea, she's doing good. She's making about 400 percent on her advertising dollar. She's spending one buck to make four bucks. And she's making a living with it. That's what she does as full time job.

Paid advertising is really the only main alternative for people not willing to learn search engine optimization techniques. These are mostly PPC or pay per click search engines. These essentially allow you to place a classified ad and bid on how much you want to spend per visitor. Very often, its possible to find a keyword that's popular and gets searched, but few people are bidding on it.

When it comes to advertising, fortunately there's John Reese's Traffic Secrets. John spent years making mistakes in pay per click advertising, so we don't have to. His home study course is the best work ever written on the subject of paying for internet advertising.

[Traffic Secrets](http://www.cdzn.com/wow) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/wow>

Another very good way to make sales is with a newsletter. Find affiliate links on the same topic as your newsletter and weave them in context throughout the content. Its very effective marketing, especially in the form of endorsements. Its also very low cost, because email is free.

***So, for example, say I had a newsletter about drums, maybe Vintage drums. I would weave links throughout the copy for various products related to drums and music. Is that correct?***

That's correct. For example, you could have how-to's. You could have an article about a new type of stick, that's got a metal core, as opposed to a wooden one. You could talk about the sound of natural animal skin heads as opposed to mylar ones.

You could tell them how to preserve that antique finish, without changing the value of the drum. You could do monthly interviews with some famous drummers, or help give exposure to new bands.

There could be a product review on something like road cases for the drums. And, in the review, have an affiliate link that leads out, where they can make the purchase.

It's simply because you're saying, "These are the best road cases that I've ever seen." You're building credibility for the product as a third party. By doing that, you're endorsing the product. People are a lot more likely to click through and buy, with this style of persuasion.

***It's brilliant where you come up with these very specific techniques. I can tell you must have a few successful - music related - affiliate sites out there ;-). Which actually brings us to.... What are the key ingredients for a successful offer, to get a prospect to click through, and then buy?***

It depends on what's being sold. Sometimes an info product will take a sales letter several pages long. Sometimes all it takes is a couple of paragraphs and a link. It all depends on how much work the advertiser does on their site. If they do a good job of selling, the less preselling that you - the publisher - needs to do.

If they do a lousy job of selling, you might need to write a two-page sales letter, convincing someone that they need the product.

Essentially, you'll have to go and look at the advertiser's site, and see how much work they've doing for you. But there are some rules of thumb...

- Appeal directly to the emotion of the reader, talk about them, not about you
- Tell them how your offer will save them time or make them money

- Appeal to their vanity, like losing weight, or being more popular
- It's very important to offer a solution to a perceived problem
- Talk about how they'll benefit by using the product or service
- Don't talk about the features, talk about the benefits
- Keep the website clean looking and fast loading with limited fonts and colors
- Show photos of real people experiencing real emotions

***Ah, key. So, if you can find a web site that accomplishes all those ingredients, you've got it made. But if you don't get all that, you should actually.... create it yourself?***

Yes, do it yourself. It's important to test, track the results, re-test and find out what works the best.

I've had really good success with one or two paragraphs when the destination does a good job of selling. On the other hand, if the destination site is weak, or it's little more than an order form, you might need write a sales letter and pre-sell like crazy, in order to get good results.

***How does one, a beginner, or an established business handle the sale with the prospective customer?***

Well, that's the beauty of affiliate marketing, you don't handle the sale. That's the whole point. You never touch any physical inventory. You never ever ship products or talk to the customer (that is, unless you get their email address while they visit your page).

As an affiliate, all you did was capture someone's attention in a classified ad, an ezine or a search engine, direct them temporarily to your page, convince them to click a link, and they're gone, off and shopping at the destination site.

If you do your job right as an anonymous affiliate, you should get - and lose - your visitor in as little as 30 seconds.

Everything is tracked through the link on your web page. That little bit of code you received when you joined the affiliate program. Usually the advertiser provides real time stats so you can log into their site and see how many clicks and sales that you've sent their way. You can also see how much money you're owed and what your paycheck is likely to be.

But you don't handle physical inventory. You don't ship product. You just create web pages that capture visitors for a short period of time.

***So, really, your only job as an affiliate, is to get people to go to your web pages?***

And to appeal to the reader's emotions in such a way, that you persuade them to click on your links. That's the most important part. Getting the traffic is often far easier, than getting people to perform your desired course of action, like clicking a link or filling out a form.

The other part is capturing their email address with a simple two line form, that takes less than ten seconds to fill out. It's critical you want to be a newsletter publisher or make follow-up offers.

You can offer a special report in PDF format, or a text file of perceived value, in exchange for their email address. That way, you can keep a relationship with the prospective customer, by firing off an immediate autoresponder and follow-up emails down the road.

***How important are autoresponders for affiliates?***

I think they are very important. If you prefer to remain an anonymous affiliate, and don't get the email address, you only get a one shot commission on the sale. If you get the email address, you open up a whole new world of possibilities, and potential future sales.

Autoresponders can be very effective, especially in developing an email relationship with people. Not only can you thank someone for signing up for your mailing list, you can also send them a series of tips, secrets or how to lessons, with affiliate links woven into the content.

The online service I use - AWeber Systems - is not only an autoresponder, its also an email collection system, database, mail manager, bulk mailer with automatic remove links. Its also an ad tracker and spam checker.

[AWeber Opt-in Bulk Mailer & Autoresponder](http://www.cdzn.com/aws) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/aws>

It allows you to test and track, which advertising campaigns are bringing the most traffic. It also prevents your emails from getting blocked, by checking your outgoing mail, for things that might trigger the spam filters.

So, yes, overall, I think autoresponders are an important component of a good marketing mix. An essential tool in any marketer's toolbox.

***If you had to start all over, how would you use affiliate programs today to make a six-figure income?***

I'd start with [NicheTracker](#) to do keyword research and find niches. Probably focus electronic accessories, or consumables like batteries, prescription drugs, herbal remedies, supplements or anything related to health, diet and fitness.

I'd learn all I could about improving my search engine rankings. I'd read things like Planet Ocean's [Winning the Search Engine Wars](#), the [TNT Guide](#) and [Stomping the Search Engines](#).

I'd start building optimized web sites using Dr. Andy Williams [SEO Website Builder](#). I'd keep building sites until I had a cluster of between 5 and 10 minisites on related topics and link them together.

Then I'd submit a home page, of one of the minisites, to all the directories and wait for the crawling search engines to find the mininet network of sites on their own.

***And what do you mean exactly by "cluster?"***

I was mentioning the minisites, each minisite being between five and ten pages in content. Set up several of these minisites and link them together, and you have a cluster of minisites, or what I like to call, a mininet.

***Does each minisite - in the mininet - have to have it's own separate domain name?***

Yes, I find that I get the best search engine results, when each minisite has its own domain name. They don't need their own IP address, that can be shared with other sites, to take advantage of very low cost hosting services.

After about six months, the mininet should be making good money from the various affiliate programs. I'd then phone the owner of the affiliate program and ask for a raise.

If I'm their top affiliate and they're paying me 15% commission, I'd ask for 20%. Most of them will agree, not wanting to lose their best sales person.

I'd also throw into the mix, a little paid advertising in the form of pay per clicks, targeted buys in large circulation ezines and maybe some classifieds on large portals like AOL. I'd also start a newsletter and maybe write some reports or ebooks on the same topic as the web site.

***Are there trends in affiliate marketing that can help get an edge in generating traffic, and making more money than the competition?***

Yes! Get their email addresses now! It will become your most important business asset in the future. Start a dialog with visitors now, so they become accustomed to receiving email from you. Send what's new info, tips, tricks, industry stories, anything of interest.

But it doesn't have to have a LOT of content, if you don't want to write a newsletter. Just make sure its valuable content and you start emailing those customers now. The search engines could all go to a paid advertising model tomorrow (though it's not likely). But if you have your email list, you could still make a good living with that.

Just remember, when it comes to permission based email marketing, it's a friendship. If you want to sustain that email relationship, remember to tell... not sell. Every subscriber is your friend and should be treated as such. Personalize each email you send. Remind them you have an existing relationship. And respect all remove requests.

Another trend is toward paid advertising. Unlike other media - which is almost impossible to track - paid internet ads let you know exactly how many clicks and dollars it took to get the sale. You can test and track every aspect of your marketing. You can keep improving the ads until you have a successful sales process in place and then move on to the next project.

The best work on PPC advertising is [Long Tail Cash](#) by Dave Tropeano. I call it the ultimate home-study course. It took years to make and all his methods are scientifically proven to work. He teaches you everything you need to know about testing an ad, tracking results and generate more buying traffic.

Here's another trend (a real bombshell actually).... find out where the retail sector is.... and don't go there.

***Don't go where the retail market is? What do you mean by that?***

Well, when it comes to some things, it's tough to compete with the local mall if someone can just go down there, and buy the same stuff you're trying to sell as an affiliate. Either go for the stuff that's too new, or too old, or too strange, or too exotic, or too personal for the retail stores to stock.

Too new, might mean a national ad campaign for a new cell phone. It's an insert, or flyer, inside the local newspaper. It's being advertised like crazy in

print. They don't have it in the retail stores yet, but there are some places on the internet where you can buy it.

So, not only will people be clamoring to buy the advertised stuff, but they'll also be looking to get accessories and batteries. That's where the real money is to be made.

So, watch the junk mail, flyers and catalogs that land on your doorstep. Watch for new items. When you spot one, quickly set up a web page for it. Advertise it in a pay per click search engine, so that you can get there fast and first.

You'll be the only one, with an affiliate web page for this new make and model number that's being advertised, but the retail market - being what it is - is too big and slow to react, and has not caught up with it yet.

***Wow, that's very valuable information.***

Yes, and a good example of the opposite is.... a laptop computer that's three years old. Retail doesn't stock the battery anymore.

What makes more sense to the consumer? Go down there and show them your computer, let the retail store order it (probably over the internet), add markup or profit margin, and make you drive down there a second time to buy it?

Or does it make more sense to order it yourself over the internet, with no retail markup and have it delivered to your door within 24 hours? Hmmm

***Oh, that is exciting. That is huge. Wow!***

Yes, find out where the retail sector is, and don't go there. Either go ahead of it, or behind it. Find that window, and that's generally where the biggest profit margins lie for the affiliate.

***Can you give examples of successful affiliates you've worked with? How they did it, How long it took them to be successful? The niches they chose, and how much money they made? Some success stories?***

Giving specific examples of my customers is a little tricky because of the confidential nature of my clients. Essentially, all I told them, is what I'm telling you here.

I also told them HOW to set up the minisites, and HOW cross link them into a mininet, for maximum search engine rankings. Unfortunately, these linking

concepts are advanced and often took several audio coaching sessions before they were fully understood.

But fortunately, in "Revenge of the Mininet" I show visual examples of the linking diagrams. Now it should be much easier for people to understand with pictures, rather than with just words.

Now when people phone me for help, we can discuss a specific diagram on a specific page, and how they can apply it to the product and services they are selling as an affiliate.

### ***Can you tell us a little more about your consulting services?***

Sure, I used to offer formal consulting for \$400 an hour, with written reports and specific solutions to corporate problems, but I gave it up.

I got tired of spending three months with a client, only to have them file my report in desk drawer somewhere, saying, "Yes, we know we have these problems, but just wanted to confirm them. We're not prepared to act on them." It was a very empty feeling.

So now, instead of consulting. I offer coaching over the phone to individuals, for \$300 an hour. It's very informal with no written reports, pre or post work. It's just straight talk over the phone, much like what we're doing now.

The only difference is that the coaching client will have specific concerns, for a specific area, and I'd address very specific issues, as opposed to generic ones as in this interview.

### ***What are you working on now?***

What am I working on now??? That's top secret ;-)) No just kidding. I continue to research and write my Internet Marketing Secrets newsletter. You can subscribe free by visiting the web site and filling out the two line form.

[Internet Marketing Secrets](http://www.cdzn.com/yes) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/yes>

When you subscribe, you get my first ebook Nothing but Net as a free bonus.

I'm also experimenting with several linking strategies. I can't say much about them, other than they are top secret at the moment. But I'll be sure to publish all my findings in future versions of Revenge of the Mininet.

[Revenge of the Mininet](http://www.cdzn.com/rev) ==> <http://www.cdzn.com/rev>

***That sounds great. How can someone get a hold of you?***

If I'm not jumping around at the gym, or running errands, I'm usually at home, sitting in front of the computer, working. So that's most of the time, including weekends.

People can send their email to askmichael at mac.com. For coaching sessions they can phone (360) 450-5880, to book a time slot.

***Well, I really appreciate your time. I've gotten a lot out of it. And I personally want to thank you, because I've definitely increased my personal income as a result of your information. I would highly recommend that everyone gets everything they can from you.***

Thank you. You are very welcome. I'd just like to tell everyone listening or reading, to persevere and not give up. Quitting is easy. Working for a living is work, so is earning a living from affiliate revenue.

If earning a living from affiliate revenue was easy, everyone would be doing it. And you know what, it is easier than you think. It's just not fully understood. Try to explain affiliate marketing or affiliate revenue to somebody, and their eyes glaze over. It's almost impossible to explain it.

But thanks to ebooks like [Clickin it Rich](#), [Affiliate Marketer's Handbook](#), [Revenge of the Mininet](#) and interviews like this one, more and more people are doing it for a living every day.

It's really an investment in yourself. Every ebook you read makes you better and just a little smarter than you were before. As you test and track your results, you'll get better and better at crafting a sales message, encouraging clicks, search engine rankings, writing classified ads... you'll become better at everything as you learn and go along.

But that's the key. Find something you're passionate about, something that you love doing. Show up, be enthusiastic, put some energy into what you're doing. Do what you love and never do it for the money. Then suddenly the money will come. Success will follow.

I wish you all the peace, joy and happiness you can find. Good luck my friend! Remember to phone me for coaching if you need help with any of this! **And don't forget your pick up your bonus materials in the download area!**

<http://www.revengeofthemininet.com/rev/>

**username: revenge**

**password: 10X88**