
SEO Consult's Thought For The Day - Which SEO Hat Do You Wear?

Contributed by Administrator
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The very point of search engines is to produce the most accurate and relevant search results for their users, so in order to do this, they need to filter out sites which try to manipulate results and give irrelevant content. Google have produced guidelines for webmasters and Search Engine Optimisation practitioners Following these guidelines is described as a 'white hat' SEO approach, whereas trying to represent a website inaccurately is classed as a 'black hat' approach. The very point of search engines is to produce the most accurate and relevant search results for their users, so in order to do this, they need to filter out sites which try to manipulate results and give irrelevant content. Google have produced guidelines for webmasters and Search Engine Optimisation practitioners Following these guidelines is described as a 'white hat' SEO approach, whereas trying to represent a website inaccurately is classed as a 'black hat' approach.

Black hat SEO aims to yield as much traffic as possible in a short amount of time, assuming that it will eventually be penalised or even banned from search results altogether. White hat SEO on the other hand, aims to attract readers through good quality, sustainable content, intent on increasing readership over an extended period of time as the site's reputation grows.

The implementation of black hat SEO can be used to describe websites which put rankings on search engine results as a priority over the website's content for human visitors. Manipulation of SE spiders and indexes by deceiving visitors best summarises the black hat approach.

White hat is therefore in direct opposition to black hat, as it sees the purpose of a website is to cater for an audience's needs and not search engine rankings. Improved ranking and reputation with search engines is a natural result (after a period of time) of establishing and maintaining a great site that is reliant on high quality copywriting and other useful content.

The ethos of white hat is that every page on a site is accessible, well designed and of course, useful and informative to the visitor.

More recently, some analysts have given heed to what is termed the 'grey hat' which as the name suggests, compromises both a following and disobeying of SEO guidelines orchestrated by governing search engines. Such techniques include duplicate content on different pages, key word over-usage and off-topic link exchanges which may lead to a devaluation rather than banning of the website. Grey hat is a dangerous game to play, and when a website is your livelihood, or at the very least, your reputation, would you risk it?