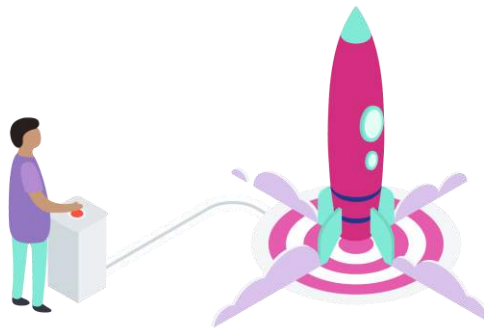




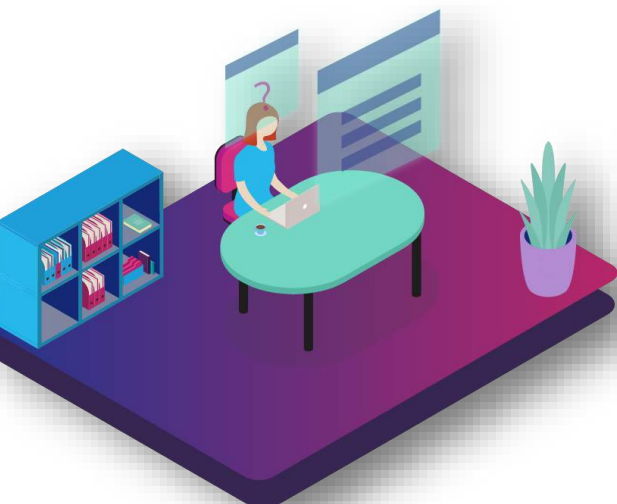
## Search Engine Optimization

### Subject Code: 21DMS007



#### Reference Notes

### Session 5: Google's SEO Updates



## What is an algorithm change?

- Google algorithm is immensely complicated and continues to get more complicated as Google tries its best to provide searchers with the information that they need.
- When search engines were first created, early search marketers were able to easily find ways to make the search engine think that their client's site was the one that should rank well.
- In some cases it was as simple as putting in some code on the website called a meta keywords tag.



## What is the Panda algorithm?

- The purpose of Panda was to try to show high-quality sites higher in search results and demote sites that may be of lower quality.
- When Panda first happened, a lot of SEOs in forums thought that this algorithm was targeting sites with unnatural back link patterns.



## Panda Algorithm.....

- Whenever a Google employee is asked about what needs to be done to recover from Panda, they refer to a [blog post by Google Employee Amit Singhal](#) that gives a checklist that you can use on your site to determine if your site really is high quality or not. Here is the list:
- Would you trust the information presented in this article?  
Is this article written by an expert or enthusiast who knows the topic well, or is it more shallow in nature?
- Does the site have duplicate, overlapping, or redundant articles on the same or similar topics with slightly different keyword variations?
- Would you be comfortable giving your credit card information to this site?
- Does this article have spelling, stylistic, or factual errors?
- Are the topics driven by genuine interests of readers of the site, or does the site generate content by attempting to guess what might rank well in search engines?
- Does the article provide original content or information, original reporting, original research, or original analysis?

## Thin content

- A "thin" page is a page that adds little or no value to someone who is reading it. It doesn't necessarily mean that a page has to be a certain number of words, but quite often, pages with very few words are not super-helpful. If you have a large number of pages on your site that contain just one or two sentences and those pages are all included in the Google index, then the Panda algorithm may determine that the majority of your indexed pages are of low quality.
- Having the odd thin page is not going to cause you to run in to Panda problems. But, if a big enough portion of your site contains pages that are not helpful to users, then that is not good.

# Google Algorithm Cheat Sheet: Panda, Penguin, and Hummingbird



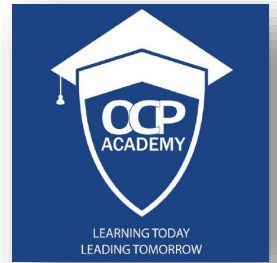
## Duplicate content

- There are several ways that duplicate content can cause your site to be viewed as a low-quality site by the Panda algorithm. The first is when a site has a large amount of content that is copied from other sources on the web. Let's say that you have a blog on your site and you populate that blog with articles that are taken from other sources.
- You can also run into problems with duplicated content on your own site. One example would be for a site that has a large number of products for sale. Perhaps each product has a separate page for each color variation and size. But, all of these pages are essentially the same. If one product comes in 20 different colors and each of those come in 6 different sizes, then that means that you have 120 pages for the same product, all of which are almost identical.



## Low-quality content

- When I write an article and publish it on one of my websites, the only type of information that I want to present to Google is information that is the absolute best of its kind. In the past, many SEOs have given advice to site owners saying that it was important to blog every day and make sure that you are always adding content for Google to index. But, if what you are producing is not high quality content, then you could be doing more harm than good.
- Here is another example. Let's say that I am a plumber. I've been told that I should blog regularly, so several times a week I write a 2-3 paragraph article on things like, "How to fix a leaky faucet" or "How to unclog a toilet." But, I'm busy and don't have much time to put into my website so each article I've written contains keywords in the title and a few times in the content, but the content is not in depth and is not that helpful to readers. If the majority of the pages on my site contain information that no one is engaging with, then this can be a sign of low quality in the eyes of the Panda algorithm.



## How to recover from a Panda hit?

- Google refreshes the Panda algorithm approximately monthly. They used to announce whenever they were refreshing the algorithm, but now they only do this if there is a really big change to the Panda algorithm.
- What happens when the Panda algorithm refreshes is that Google takes a new look at each site on the web and determines whether or not it looks like a quality site in regards to the criteria that the Panda algorithm looks at.
- If your site was adversely affected by Panda and you have made changes such as removing thin and duplicate content then, when Panda refreshes, you should see that things improve.





## What is the Penguin algorithm?

- The Penguin algorithm initially rolled out on April 24, 2012. The goal of Penguin is to reduce the trust that Google has in sites that have cheated by creating unnatural backlinks in order to gain an advantage in the Google results. While the primary focus of Penguin is on unnatural links, there can be other [factors that can affect a site in the eyes of Penguin](#) as well.



## Why are links important?

- A link is like a vote for your site. If a well respected site links to your site, then this is a recommendation for your site. If a small, unknown site links to you then this vote is not going to count for as much as a vote from an authoritative site. Still, if you can get a large number of these small votes, they really can make a difference. This is why, in the past, SEOs would try to get as many links as they could from any possible source.
- Another thing that is important in the Google algorithms is anchor text. Anchor text is the text that is underlined in a link. So, in this link to a great [SEO blog](#), the anchor text would be "SEO blog." If Moz.com gets a number of sites linking to them using the anchor text "SEO blog," that is a hint to Google that people searching for "SEO blog" probably want to see sites like Moz in their search results.

## How to recover from a Penguin hit?

- Penguin is a filter just like Panda. What that means, is that the algorithm is re-run periodically and sites are re-evaluated with each re-run. At this point it is not run very often at all. The last update was October 4, 2013 which means that we have currently been waiting eight months for a new Penguin update. In order to recover from Penguin, you need to identify the unnatural links pointing to your site and either remove them, or if you can't remove them you can ask Google to no longer count them by using the [disavow tool](#). Then, the next time that Penguin refreshes or updates, if you have done a good enough job at cleaning up your unnatural links, you will once again regain trust in Google's eyes.
- If you are not certain how to identify which links to your site are unnatural, here are some good resources for you:
- [What is an unnatural link - An in depth look at the Google Quality Guidelines](#)
- [The link schemes section of the Google Quality Guidelines](#)
- The disavow tool is something that you probably should only be using if you really understand how it works. It is potentially possible for you to do more harm than good to your site if you disavow the wrong links. Here is some information on using the disavow tool:
- [Google's documentation on the disavow tool](#)
- [7 things you may not know about Google's disavow tool](#)
- [Disavowed - Secrets of Google's most mysterious tool](#)



## What is Hummingbird?

- Hummingbird is a completely different animal than Penguin or Panda.
- Google made their [announcement about Hummingbird](#) on September 26, 2013.
- Hummingbird algorithm was truly responsible for catastrophic ranking fluctuations then we really should have seen an outcry from the SEO world of something drastic happening in August of 2013, and this did not happen.
- There are some excellent articles on Hummingbird [here](#) and [here](#). Hummingbird was a complete overhaul of the **entire** Google algorithm. As Danny Sullivan put it, if you consider the Google algorithm as an engine, Panda and Penguin are algorithm changes that were like putting a new part in the engine such as a filter or a fuel pump.
- The goal of the Hummingbird algorithm is for Google to better understand a user's query.

## So how do I recover or improve in the eyes of Hummingbird?

- I know that that is a really vague answer when it comes to "recovering" from Hummingbird. Hummingbird really is different than Panda and Penguin.
- When a site has been demoted by the Panda or Penguin algorithm, it's because Google has lost some trust in the site's quality, whether it is on-site quality or the legitimacy of its backlinks. If you fix those quality issues you can regain the algorithm's trust and subsequently see improvements.
- But, if your site seems to be doing poorly since the launch of Hummingbird, then there really isn't a way to recover those keyword rankings that you once held. You can, however, get new traffic by finding ways to be more thorough and complete in what your website offers.



# THANK YOU

**Ms. Saba Karimi**

**Session 5: Google's SEO Updates**

**Subject Code: 21DMS007**

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