



Search Engine Optimization Miniseries:
“Rich Website, Poor Website -
A Website Visibility Battle of Epic Proportions”

Part One: About This SEO Case Study

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Rich Website, Poor Website – A Website Visibility Battle of Epic Proportions¹

Part One: About This SEO Case Study

About the “Rich Website, Poor Website” Case Study

Granted, this article appears a bit melodramatic. You young folks may have missed out on the classic mid-70’s 12 part series “Rich Man, Poor Man” that chronicled the radically different paths the two Jordache brothers took in life. This highly acclaimed “miniseries” covered the tumultuous relationship between the brothers as well as their competition for the affections of their parents and the beautiful Julie Prescott (played by Susan Blakely).

Rudy Jordache (played by Peter Strauss), the favored son, is industrious and ambitious – he methodically achieves great business success and ultimately gets the girl. Tom Jordache (played by Nick Nolte), the renegade, refuses to play by the rules and tragically battles his inner demons with his fists. Described by tv.com as “an epic television event of historical proportions”, it is said to have inspired a fifteen year span of dramatic (albeit cheesy) TV miniseries.²

OK, it’s a stretch but here is where I try to connect this article and web site design to a ‘70s made-for-TV drama. I have created two websites: *WITHseo.com* (www.WITHseo.com – the “Rich Website”) and *WITHOUTseo.com* (www.WITHOUTseo.com – the “Poor Website”). Check them out – the two sites look similar but differ dramatically in ways that will be described later in this article.

If this drama were to be played out in today’s Internet battleground, I believe that the disciplined and focused Rudy Jordache would have designed and maintained his website, *WITHseo.com*, taking into account its usability and relevance in order to ensure that his products and services were visible to the online community. No doubt his “bad boy” brother would exercise **poor** judgment and lack the attention to detail and patience needed to give his website, *WITHOUTseo.com*, a fighting chance. Perhaps we’d learn of his ties to the Internet underworld of “spammers” whose short-term, overly-aggressive techniques might even get his website banned from the search engines.

I designed this case study, *Rich Website, Poor Website* to demonstrate and test the web page optimization techniques that many Internet marketing and SEO experts use. These

¹ Please keep in mind that this content is provided for educational purposes in order demonstrate search engine optimization concepts. There are many factors that influence search engine results and page rank – I cannot promise that the techniques described in this article work in all cases. Thank you! –Bill Schwartz, EBIZ Machine

² tv.com, “Rich Man, Poor Man” (1976), <http://www.tv.com/rich-man-poor-man/show/5528/summary.html>

techniques take into account recommendations made by major search engines and in general are designed to both improve a visitor's online experience and enhance website visibility.

Note that this study is by no means intended to be a controlled scientific experiment. There are simply too many factors affecting web site visibility that are beyond my control! I do hope you find the contrasting techniques employed by these two sites interesting and educational, and I hope that *WITHseo.com* outperforms *WITHOUTseo.com* or the network could cancel the miniseries before Part 2 even airs!

Project Description

The www.WITHseo.com site along with its companion site www.WITHOUTseo.com are designed to demonstrate techniques that EBIZ Machine and other Internet marketing consultants use to improve web site visibility. Both sites were designed in Macromedia Dreamweaver using the same templates and styles. Both sites were launched at the same time (May 1st, 2007) and both are hosted on the same web server by EBIZ Machine.

The search engine optimization tips described below were used in the design and development of Rudy's Rich Website, *WITHseo.com*. In contrast, Tom's website, *WITHOUTseo.com*, was simply developed, deployed and ignored. Moreover, *WITHOUTseo.com* actually employs a couple of development techniques thought to impede website usability and indexing by some search engines.

I'll assume that, at his core, Tom meant well despite his many lapses in judgment. After all, several of the bad guys he beat up deserved it. Hence, no spamming, "spamdexing" or animal cruelty techniques were utilized that could potentially penalize *WITHOUTseo.com*, Tom, **or this author's reputation.**

Project Premise

The web page optimization applied to *WITHseo.com* should result in better search engine performance. In other words, I expect the Rich Website to outperform the Poor Website. Next, I will get more specific about the criteria I'll rely upon to assess their respective performances.

Success Criteria

In order to contrast the "performance" of our competing websites, the following metrics will be tracked and analyzed:

1. Indexed Pages – I’ll compare the number of web pages that are indexed in the Google search engine and Yahoo! Directory.
2. Google PageRank – I’ll compare the “PageRank” of each site.
3. Web Page Analytics – I’ll compare key site statistics such as page views and website visitors
4. Inbound Links – I’ll look at inbound links as an indicator of web site popularity

Part 2 of this Internet miniseries will analyze actual results once the techniques discussed below have had time to germinate.

Project Constraints / Disclaimers

As mentioned earlier, this study is designed for demonstration and discussion purposes – it is not a scientific study. Moreover, this is not an attempt to highlight tricks or methods designed to fool the search engines. Although this site and study are designed to be informational and educational, it is not clear if and how the experimental nature of these sites will affect their search engine indexing.

Rich Website – SEO Techniques Used for WITHseo.com

As described below, a number of standard search engine optimization techniques were used to improve the usability and visibility of the *WITHseo.com* home page. I assume that Rudy would consult with reputable Internet marketing consultants and employ techniques recommended and approved by search engines.

A. Keyword Research

In my recent article “Web Page Keywords – Do’s and Don’ts” which you can review or download at <http://www.ebizmachine.com/seotips.html>, I discuss how to find keyword phrases that are related to your business and that your potential customers actually use in Google, Yahoo! or other Internet search engines and directories.

Attempting to “practice what I preach”, the following tools and concepts were considered in the course of developing the keyphrases selected for *WITHseo.com*:

1. Overture Keyword Selector Tool -
<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>
2. The Google Suggest keyword selection tool -
<http://www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en>

- Note, however, that keyword popularity alone is not enough! I scrubbed my list of phrases carefully to ensure each phrase is BOTH popular and relevant to the website goals. I want phrases that generate a reasonable volume of qualified leads.

Using these tools to generate alternative keywords and assess the popularity of those phrases, I created a short list of phrases that were consistent with the theme and objectives of the website. I concluded that "Search Engine Optimization Tips" and "SEO Tips" were both relevant and popular Internet searches that are consistent with the strategy behind the *WITHseo.com* site.

B. Keyword Placement

There are a number of recommended locations where keywords should appear.

The *WITHseo.com* keyphrases were incorporated in these locations:

- Title Tag in Anchor Tags
- Meta Keyword Tags
- Heading Tag Content (i.e H1, H2)
- Body Text
- URL/Filenames/Links

The document title for the *WITHseo.com* home page is “**Search Engine Optimization Tips** - WITHseo.com SEO Case Study Description” (bold added for emphasis). Note that our targeted key phrase "Search Engine Optimization Tips" is a part of the page title.

Although you cannot see it, the *WITHseo.com* home page has the following keywords Meta tag embedded in the home page source code:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="search engine optimization tips,seo tips,search engine optimization,seo,web site optimization,denver,colorado,ebiz,ebiz machine,case study,seo study,seo case study">
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Again, the bold text (bold added for emphasis) is the key phrase for which the home page is optimized.

Our keyphrase occurs in the body text, but not at an excessive frequency. I shoot for inclusion of our keywords in the web page content in a visible but modest manner. The sentence "WITH SEO is a Search Engine Optimization Tips Web Site Brought to you by Web Design & Internet Consultant EBIZ Machine" is the first sentence indexed by Google. Again, our keyphrase appears there. Last I checked, the keyword density for “search engine optimization tips” was just under 2% of the words that appear on the home page.

The home page contains two headings:

- <h1> **Search Engine Optimization Tips - SEO Techniques**</h1> (bold added for emphasis)
- <h2>Denver Colorado web design and Internet consulting company EBIZ Machine has designed a case study to educate businesses about techniques used to improve the usability and relevance of their websites and ensure that their products and services are visible to the online community.</h2>

As an example of a text link that references the key phrase, the home page contains the following link:

“We will do our best to frequently publish results of this **search engine optimization tips** case study. Click here to view the results drawn from this case study thus far.” (bold added for emphasis) Note that when you click this link, you are directed to the study results page. Again, our key phrase is embedded in both the main heading and the text of the link.

C. Link Building

The goal behind link building is to develop “inbound” links to your web pages in order to drive traffic to your site and improve your search engine ranking. This topic was the subject of a previous article “SEO Link Building – Who, What, When, Where, Why (and How)” which you can view or download at <http://www.ebizmachine.com/search-engine-optimization-link-building.html>. I mention in this article that links from “authoritative” websites and “related” industry sites carry the most weight. I intend to utilize the tools and techniques discussed there to build high quality online references to the *WITHseo.com* site and study.

It's clear that link building is a very time consuming process. Our goal is to add a few relevant links every so often so as to be consistent with natural growth. I'll look for online publishing opportunities and relevant newsletters willing to share the premise and results of this study.

D. Sitemaps

Both Google³ and Yahoo⁴ offer a process by which you can provide information about the web pages that make up your site AND expedite the indexing process. Here's a handy tool you can use to create a Google sitemap: <http://www.sitemapsal.com>. In the case of *WITHseo.com*, I have followed the recommended validation and sitemap submission steps described in the Google and Yahoo articles referenced in the footnotes.

E. Development Technologies

Although frequently debated, it appears that the use of certain development technologies may impede proper indexing of website pages. Examples cited include HTML frames,

³ Google, “What is a Sitemap file and why should I have one?”, <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=40318>

⁴ Yahoo, “Yahoo Site Map Instructions”, <http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/store/promote/sitemap>

Macromedia Flash animation, complicated internal links and JavaScript. To the extent possible, I avoid the use of these technologies in the *WITHseo.com* development.

WITHseo.com is a "static" HTML website - no Flash, frames, or database access are used. JavaScript is kept to a minimum and internal page links used to navigate the *WITHseo.com* pages consist of simple directory paths.

Poor Website – SEO Techniques Used for WITHOUTseo.com

I assume that Tom would show hostility towards the SEO techniques his brother used. The plan for the Poor Website is to exercise poor judgment in its design and then ignore it. Its "Meta Tags", including keywords and page descriptions, are left undefined. No attempt has been made to optimize the *WITHOUTseo.com* web page content or embed keyphrases in site links and URLs. Going forward, no attempt will be made to refresh, update or enhance the site. I think Tom Jordache would be proud! I hope that this is not how you developed your site!

In addition, the *WITHOUTseo.com* site has been designed using development techniques thought to impede website usability and its success in search engine performance. For example, *WITHOUTseo.com* utilizes JavaScript navigation. Text links that were intentionally added to *WITHseo.com* are not a part of the *WITHOUTseo.com* pages.

In the webdesign world, HTML "frames" are sometimes used on web pages to display multiple or long HTML documents in the same browser window. Because frames are thought to impede indexing in some search engines, they are utilized for *WITHOUTseo.com*.

Conclusion

It's been a long time, but, as I recall, in the "Rich Man, Poor Man" TV miniseries both brothers suffered great personal tragedy and TV viewers lost many hours of productive time glued to the set. However, from a commercial and economic standpoint I believe it's safe to say that Rudy was certainly more of a commercial success than his misfit brother Tom.

In this "Website Visibility Battle of Epic Proportions", only time will tell if the Rich Website *WITHseo.com* triumphs over its sibling site *WITHOUTseo.com*. As described above, I have taken a number of steps to "stack the deck" in Rudy's *WITHseo.com* favor.

My plan is to publish and discuss the results of this study after enough time has passed to allow these techniques to run their course. I'll call it Part 2 of the Rich Website, Poor Website miniseries. At that same time, I'll focus more on techniques and metrics used to judge the success or failure of a search engine marketing program. So, stay tuned!

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