



Search Engine Optimization Miniseries:
“Rich Website, Poor Website -
A Website Visibility Battle of Epic Proportions”
Part Three: Good SEO Triumphs!

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

Part Three: Good SEO Triumphs!

About the “Rich Website, Poor Website” Case Study

Back in May I created an SEO case study entitled "Rich Website, Poor Website" in which I reenacted the classic TV miniseries "Rich Man, Poor Man". As part of this study, I offered to track and compare the performance of two competing, sibling websites *WITHseo.com* and *WITHOUTseo.com*. The two websites *WITHseo.com* (www.WITHseo.com – the “Rich Website”) and *WITHOUTseo.com* (the “Poor Website”) look similar but they have been designed and maintained quite differently.²

My premise was that in today’s competitive online world, the disciplined and focused mini-series character 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. I surmised that his “bad boy” brother Tom would exercise poor judgment and lack the attention to detail and patience needed to give his website, *WITHOUTseo.com*, a fighting chance.

As detailed in previous articles of this series, I applied popular web page optimization and usability techniques to *WITHseo.com* but not to *WITHOUTseo.com*. I predicted that the techniques applied to the Rich Website would allow it to “outperform” the Poor Website. In part two of this series³, I answered the question “*What the heck does outperform mean?*” There I discussed the use of “performance metrics” or “key performance indicators” to track the effectiveness of a website strategy.

No doubt that the primary goal for this study is to generate online traffic to *WITHseo.com* that exceeds the traffic to *WITHOUTseo.com*. In addition to website traffic, I discussed website “conversion”. I decided to declare success if online visitors navigate either to the “About this Case Study” page or the “Study Results” page of *WITHSEO.com*. In both cases, the online visitor is intrigued enough by the premise of the study to want to learn more.

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 [Download Part 1 “About This SEO Case Study”- http://www.withseo.com/seo-tips-downloads/search-engine-optimization-miniseries-part1.pdf](http://www.withseo.com/seo-tips-downloads/search-engine-optimization-miniseries-part1.pdf)

³ [Download Part 2 “Tracking Website Performance” - http://www.withseo.com/seo-tips-downloads/search-engine-optimization-miniseries-part2.pdf](http://www.withseo.com/seo-tips-downloads/search-engine-optimization-miniseries-part2.pdf)

As I did in the previous articles, I note here 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! However, I do hope you find this case study interesting and educational.

Overview: Techniques Applied to WITHseo.com

As described in more detail in Part 1 of this series⁴, I applied a number of web page optimization and usability techniques to *WITHseo.com*. I went out of my way to prevent optimization of *WITHOUTseo.com*.

The table below summarizes the efforts that went into improving the performance of the Rich Website.

SEO Case Study: OPTIMIZATION OVERVIEW As of August 29 th , 2007		
Technique	DATE	COMMENTS
1. Keyword research and placement	Pre-launch	Goal: use key phrases that generate a reasonable volume of good leads; insert keywords in recommended locations on page
2. Development Technologies: Static HTML and text links; minimal JavaScript	Pre-launch	WITHOUTseo.com, however, uses JavaScript links and content embedded in images
3. Sitemaps: Google & Yahoo	May 1, 2007	I followed the recommended validation and sitemap submission steps described at Google and Yahoo; no sitemaps created for WITHOUTseo.com
4. Link Building-Directory Submissions: a. GOGUIDES.ORG b. JoeAnt.org c. Top Free Search Engine Submissions	May 1, 2007	No submissions for WITHOUTseo.com Costs: a. GOGUIDES: \$30 b. JoeAnt: \$40 c. Free search engine submissions
5. Link Building-Free Online Article Submissions: a. Integrated Alliances Newsletter (www.integratedalliances.com) b. EzineArticles.com c. ArticleBin.com	IA – 5/10/2007 & 7/23/2007 EzineArticles-6/21/2007 ArticleBin-7/3/2007	Submitted parts 1 and 2 of series. Costs: FREE
6. Link Building-Online Press Releases: PRWeb.com	5/9/2007 7/2/2007	Announced release of each article in series.

⁴ [Download Part 1 \(About this SEO Case Study\) of "Rich Website, Poor Website" - A Website Visibility Battle of Epic Proportions"](#)

		Costs: \$80/release
7. Website maintenance releases & content updates	Routine updates May-August 2007	Converted articles to web page content and posted content to WITHSEO.com. No updates made to WITHOUTseo.com

Results: Search Engine Performance

First, there can be no doubt that better search engine visibility translates to better website traffic. It is relevant then to compare the extent to which the two sites are properly indexed and described in the search engines.

The following table summarizes the results as of August 29th, 2007, of the two sites relative to search engine performance on Google and Yahoo.

SEARCH ENGINE PERFORMANCE COMPARISON: WITHSEO.COM VS. WITHOUTSEO.COM As of August 29 th , 2007		
Criteria	WITHSEO.COM	WITHOUTSEO.COM
1. Indexed Pages in Google	4	4
2. Indexed Pages in Yahoo	3	1
3. Pages indexed in Google that point to our sites	72	38
4. Pages indexed in Yahoo that point to our sites	26	14
5. Our site description according to Google	"Search Engine Optimization Tips - WITHseo.com SEO Case Study Home Page"	"FREE WEB COUNTER"
6. Our site description according to Yahoo	"Search Engine Optimization Tips - WITHseo.com SEO Case Study Home Page"	"WITHOUTseo.com"
7. Googlebot: Number of different ways in which external links reference the site	11	2
8. Number of times pages on our sites appear on the first 2 pages of search engine results	6	0

Note the following about the results described above:

1. The sites are tiny – Google indexed all 4 pages for each site. Yahoo found only one *WITHOUTseo.com* page.
2. I believe that it's fair to assume that more indexed pages referencing a site translate into better Internet visibility.
3. For #7 above, I assume that the more diverse the textual references are to a site, the better. This increases both the number and likelihood of keyword matches from an online search.

4. For #8 above, searches in Google and AOL on the phrases “seo case study” and “seo study” resulted in 6 references to *WITHseo.com* displayed on the first two pages of the search results. I do not track listings on pages three and above because I believe they are less likely to be noticed.

WITHseo.com is simply better indexed and described in Google and Yahoo than *WITHOUTseo.com*. For example, because we failed to properly define page titles, descriptions and hidden page “meta tags” in *WITHOUTseo.com*, Google erroneously believes that *WITHOUTseo.com* markets web counters! Yikes – that’s just wrong!

In addition, appearing on the first two pages of Google and AOL search results is very encouraging for a small site like *WITHseo.com*! Thanks to the techniques applied to *WITHseo.com*, it’s clear that surfers using Google and Yahoo are more likely to find *WITHseo.com* and understand the nature of the services promoted therein.

Results: Web Analytics

You may recall our plan to use website analytics to better understand the effectiveness of our online initiatives relative to the underlying goals of our sites. Feel free to consult the second Rich Site, Poor Site article⁵ for definitions of essential website traffic metrics like “hits”, “pages” and “visits”.

The following tables illustrate the web analytics tracked for the two websites as of August 29, 2007.

WEB SITE ANALYTICS COMPARISON: WITHSEO.COM VS. WITHOUTSEO.COM – August 29 th , 2007										
Summary by Month										<i>WITHSEO.COM</i>
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Aug 2007	22	12	12	10	107	12860	303	362	372	689
Jul 2007	24	12	9	7	140	12270	233	291	397	774
Jun 2007	19	8	8	6	110	7130	200	255	252	587
May 2007	30	14	11	7	117	13182	230	350	460	947
Totals						45442	966	1258	1481	2997

Summary by Month											<i>WITHOUTSEO.COM</i>
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals						
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits	
Aug 2007	10	4	3	3	45	1141	90	113	138	291	
Jul 2007	10	4	4	4	68	1759	126	154	144	314	
Jun 2007	11	7	3	2	56	1345	82	98	239	355	
May 2007	50	29	5	3	47	3050	115	160	883	1507	
Totals						7295	413	525	1404	2467	

Note the following about the results described above:

1. Both May and August statistics represent partial months.
2. Visits and page views for *WITHseo.com* more than double those of *WITHOUTseo.com*.

⁵ Download Part 2 “Tracking Website Performance” - <http://www.withseo.com/seo-tips-downloads/search-engine-optimization-miniseries-part2.pdf>

3. My online PR included press releases describing this SEO study submitted to PRWeb. Note that the online attention generated from PRWeb press releases directed traffic and created external links to both websites because the press release content referenced both sites. In hindsight it would have been better to have left out the *WITHOUTseo.com* URL - the disparity in traffic would have been even more apparent.

It's clear that online traffic for *WITHseo.com* exceeded *WITHOUTseo.com*. By August 29th, page views for *WITHseo.com* exceeded 1250 compared to 525 for *WITHOUTseo.com*.

Although not identified in the tables above, it's clear from an analysis of the "referring sites" web analytic that PRWeb.com press releases generated both Internet traffic and external links back to the *WITHSEO.com* site. As listed below, traffic originating from referring site PRWeb amounted to over 19% of referrals.

The top referring websites to *WITHseo.com* were:

1. (direct access – no referrer) 41.67%
2. Google (organic search) 27.78%
3. PRWeb (referral) 19.44%
4. Emediawire.com (referral) 5.56%
5. JOEANT Directory (referral) 5.56%

Results: Conversion

Our secondary goals include "sticky" visits as evidenced by navigation to the interior pages of *WITHseo.com* as well as lead generation as evidenced by navigation to the EBIZ Machine web site. In our case, conversion is the occurrence of an important action taken by online visitors: navigation to a *WITHseo.com* interior page or to the EBIZ Machine website.

WEBSITE CONVERSION COMPARISON: WITHSEO.COM VS. WITHOUTSEO.COM		
Criteria	WITHSEO.COM	WITHOUTSEO.COM
1. Conversion:	13	0
a. Drill in and review case study details page		
b. Drill in and review case study results page		
2. Navigate to EBIZ Machine	1	0

I used Google Analytics to set and track the website goals mentioned above. As a whole, the conversion rates are not high. Improving the conversion rate may very well be the subject of a future article! However, for purposes of this study, the few conversions that did occur did so at WITHseo.com.

Conclusion

Good SEO triumphed over laziness – Rudy’s Rich Website outperformed Tom’s Poor Website. www.WITHseo.com is more visible and more accurately described in Google and Yahoo than *WITHOUTseo.com*. Website analytics suggest that online traffic for *WITHseo.com* exceeds *WITHOUTseo.com*. Only *WITHseo.com* achieved real conversions – as hoped, some online visitors to *WITHseo.com* navigated to the interior pages I targeted as goals.

In conclusion, even small websites can benefit from an understanding and application of standard web page optimization techniques. Don’t be concerned by my description of *WITHseo.com* as the *Rich* Website – the techniques used to improve online visibility are NOT necessarily expensive. You will, however, need focus, discipline and patience. If, like me, you caught every melodramatic episode of the 70’s Rich Man, Poor Man miniseries, it should be no surprise that rash brother Tom’s *WITHOUTseo.com* falls short of Rudy’s *WITHseo.com*.

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