$Client Wikipedia Project Proposal

Author: Christian McArthur

Executive Summary

For websites wanting to expand it's link profile and diversify the sources of it's traffic, Wikipedia can serve as a useful medium. There are several strategies to make best use of the online encyclopedia. At the same time, there are many pitfalls that inexperienced users and editors of Wikipedia can fall into. This proposal outlines some of these pitfalls and potential strategies with utilizing Wikipedia.

Assuming that $Client's website has pages that contain unique content, it is possible that these pages can be linked to on Wikipedia to help drive traffic to $Client. To proceed with any of the proposed strategies in this document, the URLs of these pages must be determined. Once this is accomplished, more specific timeline can be proposed in terms of articles that can potentially link to $Client.

Introduction

Wikipedia is the sixth most trafficked site according to Alexia.com. It has between 80 and 105 million pageviews in any particular day. Having this many eyeballs on the site provides the potential for a large number of click-throughs to other websites that are linked in Wikipedia articles.

The articles on Wikipedia are supposed to comply with policies and guidelines in an attempt to ensure the quality of the articles. Due to the number of these rules, and the habit of some Wikipedia editors to be "Wikilawyers", it can be difficult for new editors to make substantial contributions to articles without running afoul of WIkipedia's policies. As a result, new editors making potentially controversial edits have those changes removed from the site.

For companies wishing to use Wikipedia as a platform for promoting their company and/or attracting traffic from Wikipedia to their own site, a whole set of rules covers conflicts of interest and paid editing.   Editing articles in violation of these policies can result the edits by those users to be removed from the site and, in some cases, the user and/or IP address being blocked from editing Wikipedia articles.

Therefore, to be able to utilize Wikipedia as a potential avenue for attracting visitors great care must be taken. Changes to articles made by new editors are more likely to be reverted. So, an experienced user with Wikipedia is more likely to have edits remain on the site for long periods of time.

Wikipedia Experience

I first began editing Wikipedia articles in 2007 as an "anonymous" IP user. I created a user account (TreyGeek) in February of 2008 and have made more than 15,000 edits since then. The primary topic of articles I have edited has been MMA-related, including significant contributions to the UFC 140 event article.

Other significant contributions that I have made to Wikipedia include a rewriting the article about Texas State University transforming it from a cut-and-pasted copyright violation to "Good Article" (GA) status. I also created a new article about the "Mugshot Publishing Industry" which earned a place on Wikipedia's home

page as a "Did you know" item. I also programmed, and had approved by administrators, a bot to perform repetitive edits to MMA Wikipedia articles.

I have been inactive on Wikipedia over the last couple of years due to full-time work responsibilities. However, over the years, I have managed to establish myself as a responsible editor particularly in the realm of MMA articles.

Proposals

Based upon my experience with editing Wikipedia articles and knowledge of it's policies and guidelines I have several proposals for how $Client can best take advantage of Wikipedia.

Do not add links on a mass scale quickly

Wikipedia articles include sections for "External Links". Links in this section are to off-Wikipedia websites that are relevant to the subject of the article. It would not be beneficial to add links to $Client on a mass scale to articles. Adding links in this way will often be considered spamming. Not only will the links be removed from articles it can result in a negative image for a company whose links are being spammed, even if the company doesn't support the additions.

Do not publish unique stats to Wikipedia

If $Client has statistics that are truly unique and is not available elsewhere, or hard for the average reader to find, on the Internet, then this information should probably not be added to Wikipedia articles. This would be especially true for adding these statistics as charts and tables.

There are multiple reasons for this advice. A guideline says that Wikipedia should not be a statbook. Rather the preferred focus of Wikipedia articles should be on writing prose about the subject of the article. Also the content and structure of statistics tables is often the subject of heated debates on Wikipedia. Therefore, adding new information to these tables can be difficult. Finally, if the information that $Client has is truly unique and hard to find elsewhere, then it would be in $Client's best interest keep it on their site to attract visitors. Publishing it on Wikipedia will allow visitors to obtain this information without visiting $Client's website.

Add new content referenced by $Client

The best way to add links to a site on Wikipedia is by adding new content to the prose of an article. For example, consider an MMA fighter who completes a high percentage of attempted takedowns against an opponent who is rarely taken down. This is notable information that can be added to articles for both fighters. Since information added to Wikipedia is supposed to be referenced, a link to $Client's website showing this statistic can be added. Readers of the article who want to double check this information will follow the link and visit $Client's website. Assuming $Client has a site that is friendly for visitors to use those readers will likely visit the site frequently.

Since the links are being added to support notable information in articles, they are less likely to be removed. A campaign to add notable information in this manner will slowly build up a link profile from Wikipedia to $Client's website. This link profile will send more visitors to $Client and could even result in persons unaffiliated with $Client to add information and links of their own to other Wikipedia articles.

Add external links slowly

The addition of links to the "External Links" section of articles in mass and quickly can, and likely will, be construed as spam and the links removed. However, utilizing the "External Links" section of articles is still possible. To do so, will require patience and judicious selection of which articles to add links to. Specifically, pages on $Client's website that are exceptionally unique and contains information that is not readily available elsewhere would be good candidates for addition to "External Links".

Create article about $Client

Stand alone articles about companies and websites can be written if the company/website is notable and has had significant information publishing about it by third-party sources. An article such as this provides an entire Wikipedia page devoted to the company and multiple links back to the website. Great care must be taken to be sure that there is sufficient material and sources for the article to stand on its own. Otherwise, the article could be deleted entirely from Wikipedia.

Add information about $Client in appropriate articles

For companies or websites that are not notable enough to have an article of its own, it could be added to articles about the genre. These articles could include "List of" articles or general knowledge articles that the company works within. For $Client this could be articles about sports commentary, sports statistics, and other broader topics. Again, care must be taken to be sure that additions to other articles do not become too "spammy". Otherwise, the additions risk being deleted.

Moving Forward

To move forward with this proposal there are several things that need to be done. First of all, after examining the MMA pages of $Client, they show little in the way of unique content. It seems to be a repository of news stories published by third-party sites. Before any planning of edits to Wikipedia and it's articles can begin, the location of unique information (specifically the URLS) on $Client must be known. In addition, the specific strategy, or strategies, that $Client wishes to utilize must also be known. Once that information is available, discussions about timelines and costs can be held.