

Article Directory Master Controller Interview

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Below is an interview I conducted with Matt Ellsworth. He's the owner of ArticleSnatch.com, one of the top article directories. Matt provides an article directory owner's perspective on how to be effective with your article marketing. He has a lot of great insight for us.

Chris Crompton: Can you give us some background your ArticleSnatch.com article directory?

Matt Ellsworth: Yeah. I started Article Snatch on December first of 2005. I've been running now for about a year and a half.

I started it just as an experiment to actually find out what would happen if you had people submit a fair amount of content to a site on a daily basis, and whether or not Google, as well as other search engines would consider those pages as valid sources of information.

So we started out in December of 2005, and worked on it for just a couple hours a week. Then we gradually started spending more and more time with it as it grew, and grew, and grew, and turned into the fairly large site that it is today.

Chris: Yeah, I was looking at it, apparently you've now got 172,537 articles.

Matt: That's correct.

Chris: That's a lot of articles! So you said it was an experiment, so what have been some of the findings in this experiment?

Matt: Well pretty much what we found is that if you add content to your site, the more content that we get the more and more traffic the search engines sent us.

So, basically it seemed that as time went on, this site was viewed as more of a reliable source of information--just a lot of topics. Fortunately we receive 50-60% of our traffic is directly from Google, Yahoo and a few other search engines as well.

Chris: How much traffic are you getting?

Matt: We usually do about half a million page views a month. Some months it's more--it's closer to a million. That includes all the RSS views as well, because every article is included in the category in which it is submitted.

So, our access feeds are picked up quite often by lots of places. So much so, that we had to move it to a different host, because we destroyed the old server we were on.

Chris: I can imagine. So, you guys have spent over a year and a half now and have tons of page views a month and tons of articles, and 15,000 or so authors...

What are some things that your authors are doing wrong? What are some ways you see that people really aren't maximizing the opportunities they have in your article directory?

Matt: I think the biggest thing that people need to do is realize that submitting articles is not a one-time process. Article submission is a daily or weekly process. It's not just, "I'm going to go in, and I'm going to submit 10 articles. Then the gates of traffic are going to flood to my site, and I'm going to have so many orders--I won't know what to do."

While that may be true in one in a million cases, what people need to realize is, article marketing is something that you just do on a regular basis. You just add it to your habits--whether it's one article a day, or one article a week, it's important that you're continually adding articles into the circulation.

Key Point

Article Marketing is not a one-time process. You must establish a consistent submission pattern.

Because those articles you submit to directories then also get picked up by other publishers who maybe are going to use in their blog, or in their newsletter, or on their website as well. But it's not just the links back from the article directories, it's also the links when another publisher takes your article and uses it in full with all the links in his blog.

It's the whole “getting the content out there and into circulation” that's really important.

Chris: I thought it interesting that you said, "Either one article a day, or one article a week." You didn't go out to, "One article a month, or one article a quarter."

I spoke with an expert article marketer who doesn't have his own directory. He submits a lot of articles, he does about 20 article submissions a day—20 unique articles. He submits them to a lot of different directories. I'm not sure that most people would have the motivation to be that prolific with their writing. What would you say is the optimum sweet spot of how often you should submit your articles?

Matt: It ultimately depends upon, how broad of a niche you're going to write about long-haired German Shepherd dogs. If you extend that out a little bit, because there's only so many people who are interested in long-haired German Shepherds. But instead if your niche is more generalized like, "Business Development," or "Chocolate."

Key Point

Article marketing provides a two-fold benefit. 1) Links in your article for SEO benefit. 2) Direct traffic to your site from the articles.

Then I would say that, "The more the merrier," but whatever it is, you want to try to be consistent. So if you got a staff of writers writing for you, and you can submit one a day--that's amazing, actually.

But if you are just a one-man shop like a lot of people are, then once a week is a good habit to get into. Once a week--that way they know that there's always new content coming in there, and then as that trickles out, and as those articles get spread out across the Internet--just the more links, and the more traffic for your site.

The benefit of submitting articles is two-fold. One is the links from the article directories, as well as anybody who republishes your content. But the other benefit is if you write an article and people feel that you've provided them with valuable information, after they've read it they're likely to click the link at the end of the article, and go back to your site--and that's the whole idea!

So it's not only the benefit of the search engines, but it's also the benefit of people actually coming to your site.

Chris: Now as far as the categories that people choose to submit into, there are certain categories that I'm sure have many more articles in them than other ones.

So, I would think that if you submit into a category that's got a ton of submissions daily going to it, the article's not going to stay at the top very long before another

article bumps it out, and it's not in the first page category any longer.

Do you have tips on what categories people should choose?

Key Point

Submit your article to the deepest, most specific category relevant to your topic in each article directory.

Matt: I would suggest that people pick the deepest, most specific category available. So, if your article is let's say for example about "Diabetes, " then you would want to pick the "Diabetes" category, and not the "Health" category. If you look at my directory, just as an example, there's about 19,000 articles in "Health" but only 120 in "Diabetes."

Chris: So that's 120 over the course over the past year and a half that you've been doing this.

Matt: That's correct. The reason for that is some people pick the wrong category. You'll notice the most popular category on my site is a category called, "Uncategorized."

Where some article directory owners will pick the correct category for you for your submission, I have found that the people who continually submit to the wrong category, their articles just get placed in "Uncategorized."

So it's either that they didn't pick a category, or they used a submission program that submitted an invalid category--those articles just go there.

Chris: That's really an exciting thought of getting an edge simply by choosing the most specific category. Yet some people might think, "Whoa! I want to get the most views if I submit to the most popular category," But if you're submitting to the "Health" category there are thousands of other articles to compete with.

Matt: Yeah. I would say that if you submitted to the "Health" category on our site, the article would only stay on the actual front page of the "Health" category for less than a week, and it's going to be off of there.

Whereas if you pick a category that's very specific to it, you've done two things. One--your article shows up right there, on the category page. Two--more importantly--if Bob's writing a newsletter about "Diabetes" for example, Bob's going to go right to the "Diabetes" catalogue section. He's not going to skim through the other sections, he's going to go straight there.

So it makes it easier for people who are looking for information. Which are obviously the people who you want to read your article, and then click on the link to your site--as well as easier for publishers, search engines, everything else to all find the information that you're trying to share with them.

Chris: I know that you said there are only 100 or so articles in that specific category. The article will probably stay on the front page of that sub-category couple of months.

Matt: Yeah, for quite awhile. Some of the categories still don't even have 100 on them. It displays 100 articles per category, when you click on them.

Chris: Let's say you've got an article about diabetes. Maybe you don't always want to be submitting to "Diabetes" so you would maybe write the article instead maybe about teenagers that have diabetes. So you might instead submit to the "Teenager" category. What are your thoughts on submitting to a side category besides your primary one?

Matt: As a directory owner, I'm the person who sits there and reads them, and reviews them, and makes sure they're in the right category, I prefer the person to pick the category that is most relevant.

So if you're writing an article about teenagers then a category about teenagers would make sense. But if the focus of your article is still diabetes then that would still be the right topic.

Now obviously you run into problems when you're talking about things like "Website Promotion." Because then there's several different categories that all have to do with the Website Promotion, including one called, "Website Promotion."

So it can be a tricky thing, and in those cases just so long as you're close it's good enough. But if your article is about "Diabetes" you don't want to submit it to "Travel."

In fact a lot of other directory owners I know, simply delete them. If you don't pick the right category, they'll just delete them. They go, "I don't have time for this--delete."

Chris: Well with 170,000 articles, it's probably a lot easier to delete the ones that don't fit than spend your time categorizing them.

Matt: It certainly is. We get 300-500 new article submissions a day. So it's a lot more convenient when people just pick the correct category

Chris: All right, now moving on to more of the positive. What are some things that your author's are doing right? Now obviously we'd say, "Well, they're submitting to the correct category." But besides just correctly categorizing their articles and submitting articles consistently on a regular basis-- what are other attributes of authors, or articles that are really effective?

I'm coming to realize there aren't really competing interests involved here. What

is most effective for the article/author, is also the most effective for you as the directory owner, because you're getting more views. Whether you're an author, or a directory owner, the end goal is to have the most people, the most relevant people reading the article. Is that correct?

Matt: That's correct.

Although I hadn't given an example, because I think it's one that I've done the most tracking on, and I know that it was done honestly and legitimately, because I watched where the traffic came from. There's an article on "How to Induce your Labor." That's the title of it. This article, for the longest time, was the most popular article on the site, and it gets anywhere from 100 to 500 people a week viewing it from Google and Yahoo, the main source of traffic to the article.

And I spoke with the person who wrote it one time, just to find out how exactly they came about this article. And he said that he actually contracted it out, he had a ghost writer write the article, and he submitted it to our directory, as well as a few others, and it's pretty much targeting the phrase "How to Induce Labor." Probably a phrase that you and I wouldn't think too much of, but, because there aren't too many other people who wrote specific content for it, it ranks very well in the search engines, and it has for the past several months.

So what authors should be doing if they copy this person, or take hints from this person, is: you write an article that is very focused on whatever keyword phrase you're trying to rank for. And this could be anything from, you know, a movie title, or an article on diabetes, a specific kind of medicine for diabetes. In general, the more specific the keyword phrase, the more successful the articles do. Whether it's a three word, four word, or five word phrase; just the more specific the articles are, and then using those keyword phrases in the title as well as the description and everything else is a really important thing.

Chris: What's the best way to target the keyword phrases for the article then?

Key Point

Focus your articles on a specific keyword phrase you are trying to get traffic for.

Matt: It's really important that the main keyword is included in the title, as well as usually within the first paragraph or so. But the title is really important, because that will be the title of the article on the article directory. And then, some people also put it in their description or summary as well.

And then just use it a couple of times in the article. Obviously, you don't want to use it so many times a page that half the article is one phrase, search engines will read that as spam. There's a debate as to the amount of density that you should use, some say 3%, some say 5%, I say pick whatever you want and do it; it's just important that you use it.

And then what that does is it helps the article rank higher for that phrase, and then if the articles are ranking higher for that phrase, then those are more people who are clicking on those articles, reading that you're knowledgeable about the subject, and then clicking the link at the end of the article and visiting your site.

Key Point

You don't need to concentrate on a specific keyword density for your articles... just use the keyword naturally.

Chris: What are some things that successful article marketers do, not just their article, but with using their article successful in their business? What do these people have in common?

Matt: Well, pretty much, some of the things that they are doing, such as submitting on a regular basis which we've covered. But also if you write an article and you've submitted it to a few directories, some people then also reference those articles elsewhere. Whether it's in blog posts, or they link back to those articles

from their website, or they link to those articles from different social bookmarking or social networking sites.

It's more ways of letting the search engine know: "Hey, there's this content here, go get it, " which then obviously promotes the popularity of that

page, thus promoting the popularity of the link down at the bottom back to your site.

Chris: Yeah, that's a great idea. It could be overwhelming to post your article to a directory that's got 170,000 other articles. Yet the majority of those articles don't have any links pointing to them except from the directory itself.

So any author could make their submission much more powerful by linking to that article. So when someone's looking for diabetes information and one article has five other links pointing to it from other websites (like social bookmarking sites, or maybe even another article directory that's pointing to it) and the rest have no external links pointing to them the first one will likely be delivered up by the search engine.

Matt: That's correct. That's pretty much the way to look at it, and you know, the thing is that you've got to give the search engines all the opportunities in the world in order to discover the content if you want it to get indexed. Periodically, I actually go through and social bookmark, and promote other articles that I find that are interesting, but obviously there's only so much I can do.

I can't do that for every article, otherwise somebody would be like: "Wow, you're just a big spammer."

Key Point

For maximum effectiveness, try to build some page reputation for the articles you've submitted to various article directories. This is done by linking to the article from other sites such as blogs or social bookmarking sites.

So, I don't do that, but I made it really easy for everybody who uses this site as well as every visitor to the site to save the article to whatever service they want. On the right hand side, there's two buttons. One says: "Add this" and the other one says "OnlyWire."

And "Add this" allows you to submit it to a whole ton of social bookmarking sites, you just pick one that you want and then it goes. And OnlyWire, for people who use it, actually saves your bookmarks to 15 or 16 other sites just with one form.

Chris Crompton: I told you I talked to Sean Mize, who is submitting and writing 20 articles a day. That's a lot for me; I'm sure it is for most people to do that even though it only takes a couple of hours. His business has grown to a five-figure a month income in about a year because of just doing that.

Two or three hours a day is worth it to him and I'm sure anybody would think, "Would I be willing to spend two or three hours a day if my income would keep growing by a couple thousand dollars a month for the next year?" They would say, "Yeah, " but even so, most people don't like writing and they wouldn't do it to save their life.

Matt: Right.

Chris: That's twenty articles a day. But you could do one a day or one a week... just be sure to have consistency. But in order to make your article efforts shine, you need to be giving backlinks to articles. Maybe you've only got one a week out there, but that one article a week is really going to count.

Matt: The extra links sure don't hurt, that's for sure. Obviously, don't go spending as much time promoting an article as you would promoting your own website. But linking to it from a blog is simple.

Chris: It's a five-minute process. Once your article has been published to a directory, you go and spend five minutes tagging it in a couple different sites.

Matt: Right. Exactly. It goes a long way because it's just another way to let Google know that there is that content out there.

Chris: I think this is about the final question here. How long would you say it takes to start receiving benefits from any articles?

Matt: Well, to answer that question, it really comes down to how quickly other people start to see that article.

You're going to get benefits in two ways. One, people come to the article directory, they find article, they read it. They go, "Wow, that guy knows a lot about chocolate." And they click the link on the bottom.

Or, another guy who writes a blog on a page and all these other pages and needs content about chocolate. He goes, "Wow, I'm really glad that this guy is writing all these articles about chocolate. I'm going to start using them." And he starts distributing them as well.

Then when people go to those sites, they go, "Wow, this guy knows a lot about chocolate. Forget this guy who just copied the content. I'm going right to the guy who wrote it." It just really depends. For some people, it's a couple of weeks. But it may be longer...

For example, one of the very first articles I submitted on the directory was a review of a music album called "The Fray: How to Save A Life." I think it was the ninth article published on the site. It received zero traffic until about March of this year when "The Fray" became popular.

Lo and behold, that article got about 2,000 or so views since then, primarily all from search engines. For some reason, search engines picked it up and they deemed it relevant. But before that, it basically sat dormant on the site the whole time.

So I always tell people it's a strategy for long-term success and profitability and you never know what's going to happen. You never know who is going to read your article. You never know who's going to pick up your article. And you never know what newsletter or publication it will appear in.

We were actually contacted recently for a guy who writes "how to" guides. He wanted to know if it was OK to use some of the articles on the site in those "how to" guides. This was somebody who physically prints "how to" guides. I said, "Yeah, just follow our publisher guidelines and you're all set." I was totally shocked. The guy actually lives just a hundred miles down the road.

The fact of the matter is, publishers need content and they don't have the time or the resources to always have it ghostwritten. So being able to just go to a site and get a whole bunch of content is worth it to them.

Chris: They are willing to give you a link back to your website as payment.

Matt: Yep.

Chris: So you never know which article is going to be successful. Perhaps there is somebody out there that has all these hours available to discern our culture well enough to know that six months down the some topic will be popular, so they decide to write an article about it today.

But most people don't have that foresight. It's best to just write a lot of articles,

because you're going to get lucky with a handful of them and that will throw some good traffic to you.

Matt: Right. Exactly.

Chris: There's probably been other articles that you've written that didn't get picked up like The Fray article did.

Matt: Right. And that one was actually written by a friend of mine. He doesn't even have a website. That's how technologically savvy he is. He wrote it for a radio station. He just said, "Here. Put it up there." Nobody visited it for a year or so, and then all of a sudden this is a popular band and popular material. That article also got syndicated on several other music websites as well.

Chris: Well, are there any closing thoughts you want to give people?

Matt: Whatever rate you choose to do it, just do it consistently. One a day, one every two days, one a week. Just pick your rate and go for it. You can always work up to going faster.

Submit your article to several directories. I always say it's like fishing. You always want more lines in the water. The more the merrier.

Once you've submitted a few of them, you can always link to them from other things. Whether you blog or Twitter, you can do whatever else that people do to generate links. Having those links pointing back to the article pages will then help bring visitors to the site and present you as a more credible author.

Simple Article Marketing Plan

1. Choose the rate at which you'll write & submit your articles.
2. Submit to several directories.
3. Link back to a few of your articles from other sites.

Chris: Well, I really appreciate your time, Matt. You've given us some great information we can apply directly to our article marketing.

We'll chat again sometime.

Matt: Sounds good, Chris. Thank you.

This report has been provided by the Content Spooling Network.

The Content Spooling Network (CSN) provides a service that can automate your entire article marketing process. With about 15 minutes setup time, you can put your quality link-building on autopilot... they will do keyword research, write articles, and submit them to hundreds of sites on schedule. These include internal sites and article directories.

CSN also understands how to escape the duplicate content filter. All your link-embedded articles will carry full weight because CSN will submit a unique version of your articles to each publisher and directory. This is accomplished through a "seed article" formatting where you (or their ghostwriters) write multiple variations of each article so that multiple unique articles may be "spun" from each seed.

CSN has different levels of membership related to how many sites you can promote, how many articles you can submit each month, and whether or not they write the articles for you.

Besides the obvious time-saving virtue of CSN, it also provides another hidden benefit: consistency! Most article marketers don't stick to a promotion schedule – but regular link-building efforts are key to establish your ranking.

Unless you happen to enjoy writing articles and submitting them yourself (and have the time), I suggest you outsource this to the Content Spooling Network.

<http://www.contentspooling.net/intelligence.php>