



View Question

Q: My site has disappeared from Google - I need guidance. ([Answered](#) ★★★★★, [1 Comment](#))

Question

Subject: My site has disappeared from Google - I need guidance.

Category: Computers > Internet

Asked by: [d.springer-ga](#)

List Price: \$25.00

Posted: 23 Jun 2004 12:08 PDT

Expires: 23 Jul 2004 12:08 PDT

Question ID: 365207

Most likely causes:

SITE
www.SovereignFunding.com

- There might be a typing error
- If you clicked on a link, it ma

PROBLEM

I noticed a DRAMATIC drop in my Google rankings within the last day or two. I had many top 30 placements and they all vanished. My PageRank of 5 which I have worked incredibly hard at obtaining is now 0. Also when I do a search for my website it doesn't even show up in a Google search whatsoever. Clearly I have been penalized by Google for something reason or another.

HISTORY

I am not very web savvy so I had someone build my site about 2.5 years ago. My website really wasn't showing up much on the search engines so about 1.5 years ago I hired www.sagerock.com to do some SEO work for me (They were ranked very highly in a Sherpa SEO Buyers Guide <http://www.sherpastore.com/store/page.cfm/1759>). I definitely noticed some improvements in my Google ranking after their work was completed.

About 6 months ago I got a call from www.traffic-power.com. They guaranteed me on paper a lot of top 10 Google positions. I was skeptical but I looked them up on the Better Business Bureau and they had a satisfactory record as you can see here: <http://www.vegasbbb.org/commonreport.html?compid=58697>

I always made sure to ask the SEO consultants if their work is search engine friendly and not considered some sort of Search engine spam. Both SEO consultants said that their work was COMPLETELY search engine friendly.

RESEARCH

Now that I have been penalized I have spent the last day researching exactly what is considered SPAM by Search engines. I have come across web pages like [://www.google.com/webmasters/seo.html](http://www.google.com/webmasters/seo.html) and I am worried that Traffic-Power's pages (which are like doorway pages that automatically redirect to my site) are what might of got me into trouble.

When I emailed Traffic-Power today about my concerns this was their reply:

From: Violet Olson
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2004 12:40 PM
To: 'Sovereign Funding Group'
Subject: RE:SOVEREIGNFUNDING.COM URGENT

We are currently looking into the Google situation because we have noticed a great many people disappearing from them. This is something that happened in March and April as well but it was a bug in Google that was causing the problems, not our code. Nothing we do would get you removed from any search engine. Here is the link that explains part of the situation with Google, <http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3354441> we thought they had it fixed but maybe not. We are looking into it. As soon as we find something out, we will let you know.

Thanks,
Violet Olson
Lead Customer Support Specialist
Traffic-Power.com
www.traffic-power.com

CHANGES

I will gladly have my Webmaster remove any Google-offensive pages and I will file a complaint as Google recommends with the Federal Trade Commission against Traffic-Power.com if they have caused the problem especially since they specifically told me that their work was completely search engine friendly.

QUESTION

The majority of my business comes from Google searches and my family and I are going to be in deep financial trouble unless I can fix this problem. Yesterday I emailed help@google.com & webmaster@google.com but they have not replied back. My question is how can I find out why I was removed from Google and other than removing any Google-offensive pages what else can I do and/or who do I need to contact at Google to get the ban on my sight lifted?

Final Thought ? This is the first time I have ever used Google Ask. I wasn't sure how much to offer so I thought \$25.00 was reasonable just to ask a question. If someone could guide me through the process of fixing this I would be happy to offer substantially more or to provide

some sort of tip at the end of the process. I have always run a good and honest website and I am really out of my element right now and I could really use someone's help fixing this.

Request for Question Clarification by [larre-ga](#) on 23 Jun 2004 14:45 PDT

I'm looking over your website right now. I'll do my best to help figure out what is happening to your Google listings, and if needed, come up with a plan to set things back to normal for you.

To beginning interactive troubleshooting, I'd like you to read over the first posting in this WebmasterWorld Forum thread, and see if any the situations posed are applicable, beginning with "Start with the basics: Was your server down recently?"

You will (likely) need to register at WebmasterWorld in order to access this checklist. Basic registration is free, and will allow direct access.

I am particularly concerned about cloaking, rather than, technically, spam, since you mention Traffic-Power. For many, many moons, certain types of cloaking have been undetectable to search engine spiders. This is apparently changing, as sites are spidered more often. What pages are being spidered, and are those same pages the ones that are first reached by those clicking the link from Google Search Engine Result Pages (SERPs)? Is there a hidden redirect in place?

---larre

Request for Question Clarification by [larre-ga](#) on 23 Jun 2004 14:46 PDT

I suppose it would help to post the url. :)

Webmaster World | A Dropped Site Checklist
<http://www.webmasterworld.com/forum5/4584.htm>

---l

Clarification of Question by [d_springer-ga](#) on 23 Jun 2004 21:27 PDT

Laree,

Traffic-Power (as you can see in their email) is swearing up and down that nothing they do would get me banned but it looks like my hidden links are "cloaking" as you put it ([://www.google.com/webmasters/faq.html#cloaking](http://www.google.com/webmasters/faq.html#cloaking)).

TP is telling me that this is a Google update similar to the now infamous Florida Update and to wait a week or two for things to normalize.

The work they did on my homepage is all hidden from view. You can see it if you view the source code.

The changes that they made are as follows:

```
<br>
<p class="klose">
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/sovereignfunding.com_sitemap.html">Site
Map</a> -
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/sovereignfunding.com_friends.html">Our
Friends</a><br>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/viaticals_t.html">Viaticals</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/buyer_of_structured_settlement_t.html">Buyer
of structured settlement</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/business_notes_t.html">Business
notes</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/accounts_receivable_factoring_t.html">Accounts
receivable factoring</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/cash_flow_notes_t.html">Cash
flow notes</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/accounts_receivable_financing_t.html">Accounts
receivable financing</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/accounts_receivable_management_t.html">Accounts
receivable management</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/factoring_company_t.html">Factoring
company</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/invoice_factoring_t.html">Invoice
factoring</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/angel_investor_t.html">Angel
investor</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/structured_settlement_t.html">Structured
settlement</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/angel_investors_t.html">Angel
investors</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/viatical_t.html">Viatical</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/business_note_t.html">Business
note</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/real_estate_notes_t.html">Real
```

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estate notes</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/cash_for_structured_settlement_t.html">Cash
for structured settlement</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/factoring_companies_t.html">Factoring
companies</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/personal_injury_settlements_t.html">Personal
injury settlements</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/structured_settlements_t.html">Structured
settlements</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.sovereignfunding.com/sell_structured_settlement_t.html">Sell
structured settlement</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.bestbidloans.net">www.bestbidloans.net</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.banking-insurance-credit-investment.net">www.banking-insurance-credit-investment.net</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.pearlpoltocreditrepair.net">www.pearlpoltocreditrepair.net</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.bankjet.net">www.bankjet.net</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.bestbidloans.net/index2.htm">www.bestbidloans.net</a>
<a class="klose" href="http://www.pearlpoltocreditrepair.net/index3.htm">www.pearlpoltocreditrepair.net</a>
</p>

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Do you think that there is any chance that they are telling the truth and I should simply sit back and wait a couple of weeks? What are your recommendations?

I am going to need heavy doses of Xanax to get through this one.

Clarification of Question by d_springer-ga on 23 Jun 2004 21:33 PDT

Larre

Sorry for spelling your name incorrectly in my post to you above.

I should point out that I read the article on Webmaster World and the only thing in question are the TP links above and whether or not they got me banned or if this is just an normal Google update as TP insists.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

David

Clarification of Question by d_springer-ga on 23 Jun 2004 21:37 PDT

Larre,

I changed web hosts about two weeks ago but the transfer went smoothly. Other than that my site hasn't been down to my knowledge.

David

Request for Question Clarification by larre-ga on 23 Jun 2004 22:37 PDT

Just to let you know, I've received your responses--what you've posted is helpful, and I want to compare it carefully to an earlier copy I saved. I'm not seeing a Florida class update, nor is that sort of 'buzz' out there at the moment.

The spelling of my name is of consequence. I misspelled (mistyped it) when registering for Google Answers, so I'm in no position to be offended. I settle for anything that starts with "L".

Request for Question Clarification by larre-ga on 23 Jun 2004 22:38 PDT

--NO-- consequence. *laughing* I'm mistyping tonight, as well.

Request for Question Clarification by larre-ga on 24 Jun 2004 00:13 PDT

Hi David,

Take that Xanax. I don't like what I'm finding as I page through the site. I believe that the redirects and the link farms and link networks are "killin' ya" at this point.

I don't think we're seeing a Florida type update. Based on what I'm hearing from others around the 'Net, it appears that new filters are being applied. Filters that are able to detect page redirects that have previously passed muster. I'd love to see daily versions of your .htaccess file.

Believe me, I don't think you're one of the bad guys, nor do I think you've been duped by your SEO partners. It's my opinion that the standards are tightening daily. Google's algorithms and filters are catching up with some of the more sophisticated SEO techniques. SEOs are always looking for the edge of the envelope and trying to ride safely just inside of it.

I know it's difficult to just wait it out, even overnight. I understand your situation very well. But -- before I advise you to

make changes, I'm looking for confirmation that this isn't just a glitch.

Another reason -not- to quickly change? Think about the cat and mouse tactics between the search engines and SEO industry. If you wanted to flush the game, you might filter out a particular profile, then watch to see what happened to those sites that were penalized. Action might provide confirmation. I'm not sure this is a valid scenario, but I have heard it told too many times from experienced sources to completely discount it.

Tinker a bit with your AdWords campaign, maybe up the bids a tad for this interim, see if you can find additional keyword phrases to target. When the free SERPS are in trouble, it's time to hit the PPC harder, fine tune with landing pages that convert the sale. Think of as a hedge against dependency on search ranking.

Google isn't out to punish anyone. Their business plan calls for the best possible search results for their users. Their goal is not precisely compatible with your own at this stage. When you bank on a search engine, long term it becomes more important to make sure that you're heading in the same direction, rather than fighting the current. I will go into greater detail on how to achieve that compatibility as I study your site.

Hang in there, overnight at least. I'm very glad you've chosen Google Answers. I'll do my best to assure that you're absolutely thrilled with us.

---larre

Clarification of Question by [d_springer-ga](#) on 24 Jun 2004 08:16 PDT

Larre,

With the help of my web host I have zipped copies of the .htaccess file and my website log files. You can download them here.

<http://www.dropload.com/redeem.php?t=76f0144ea19c954378f752ba13cf690d>

My web host asked us the following: "There are no daily versions of the .htaccess file. This file is created by FrontPage and it is updated when you change some of its settings only. Please, tell us of the goal you are after, so we can advise."

Thanks for your help. I'll work on my ppc campaigns as you recommend and continue popping Xanax in the meantime.

Sincerely,

David

Request for Question Clarification by [larre-ga](#) on 24 Jun 2004 09:30 PDT

Thank you. I've accessed the file.

In checking the .htaccess file, I was looking at possible methods behind the redirects, to (hopefully) verify that what's in place -is- the type of redirect considered benign by Google and other search engines. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It might also be helpful to examine your robots.txt file in order to determine if some of the difficulties originate there, as well.

I'm preparing an analysis, and a list of steps that need to be taken. I will post this as an Answer this morning (my morning Pacific time). That won't signify the end of the Q/A process. It only means that I feel I have enough information/research available to provide substantial guidance. We can continue the dialog through Answer Clarifications, similar to the Question Clarifications we've been using so far.

You asked originally about the Question bid/payment amounts. I can understand the difficulty in deciding what to bid. There's a process available to raise the question price, before it is answered, and the ability to tip up to \$100 when the question is closed (rated). I anticipate that the value of my work product will exceed the original value of the question. I'm also confident we'll be able to agree on compensation. Not to worry for the moment. I'm more concerned with getting your site back in Google.

---larre

Clarification of Question by [d_springer-ga](#) on 24 Jun 2004 10:19 PDT

Larre,

I checked and I don't have a robot.txt file.

Regarding a tip I agree that one will be in order. I don't believe we will have any problem coming to a mutually agreeable figure. Just the savings in Xanax will make it worth it :)

Sincerely,

David

Answer

Subject: My site has disappeared from Google - I need guidance.

Answered by [farre-ga](#) on 24 Jun 2004 12:42 PDT

Rated: ★★★★★

Thanks for most likely causes:

- There might be a typing error

As we have discussed, there are some questionable SEO tactics being employed on your website, Sovereign Funding. While Google doesn't specifically name or provide exact details of techniques that cross the line, use of the same and similar techniques have been cited by a number of webmasters of sites dropped out of the Google index. From that evidence, logic says that these particular practices are now off limits, and sites using them are subject to removal from the index.

I have no doubt that many single techniques slip past the algorithms and filters undetected, but there now appears to be a "threshold" upper limit. No one questionable item, but the sum of all are evaluated against a profile of what constitutes "Over-SEO'd". The filters are constantly under revision as techniques are reviewed and added to the lists of disallowed actions.

There is still speculation that this most recent crop of "drop outs" is due to a glitch, and the sites will be returned to the index when fixed. You can cross fingers and wait. Or you may elect to proactively bring the site into compliance with Google's stated best practices, and apply for readmission to the index.

I found the following on www.sovereignfunding.com:

INTERSTITIAL PAGES designed for search engine spiders, rather than human consumption. These are the "added" pages you listed above. They need to be removed. This sort of redirection fell out of favor with the search engines some time ago. You're lucky the site lasted in the index so long. These particular pages are relatively sophisticated, keyword densities carefully calculated, and human language word frequencies taken into account, but I'm sure you realize that they aren't terribly effective sales tools. Human customers reading the information are unlikely to be enticed by the content. They were created specifically to manipulate the search engines.

LINKS TO LINK FARMS designed to artificially inflate the number of links to your site by unrelated websites or those established solely for the purpose of linkage. These links need to be removed.

bestbidloans.net
banking-insurance-credit-investment.net
pearlpoltocreditrepair.net
bankjet.net
bestbidloans.net
pearlpoltocreditrepair.net

These domains are listed by WHOIS as owned by a single entity, and the Domain Servers shown as EASYHOSTINGNOW.COM, which is identified as a blacklisted spam domain.

HIDDEN LINKS are found on nearly every site page. This practice has been banned for years, regardless of method used. Remove these links.

Your own RECIPROCAL LINKING PROGRAM also contributes to the impression of over-optimization. The fact that Page Rank of 4 or greater is a condition for linkage would be a red flag. It could easily engender spam reporting by those eliminated from applying. If reported, then checked by a Google minion, it's likely to count as a black mark. A directory of sites is perfectly allowable, but references to Page Rank requirements and trading linkage is considered to be another method of artificially inflating page rank.

Evaluate all pages of your site in comparison to the Guidelines. When you feel confident that the site meets Google's criteria, write to help@google.com to apply for readmission to the index. Professionalism and repentance are key elements.

Sample letter:

Dear Google,

I am the owner of <http://www.sovereignfunding.com> .

I did not realize that participation in Link Exchanges and Traffic-Power programs could cause problems for my website. I was assured that these techniques were Google-friendly by BBB listed providers of Search Optimization Services.

I now understand that the practices used are not acceptable. I apologize for having allowed them to be placed on my website. I've removed the questionable pages and links from the site. I promise not to repeat such mistakes.

I am asking you to please consider reinstating my website, <http://www.sovereignfunding.com> into the Google Index.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

There's no guarantee that you will be reinstated, or any indication of how long the process might take, but I would estimate the chances as favorable.

This pared-down website will need further work to get it back to its former level in the SERPS. I will gladly provide references for do-it-yourself guidance, plus referrals to reputable advisors, if you'd like.

This is a good point to pause for questions. Is there anything I haven't covered that you're curious about? I'll be happy to clarify as needed.

---larre

Answer Strategy

The information provided is based upon personal and professional experience as a web designer, working in tandem with search engine optimization specialists.

Request for Answer Clarification by d_springer-ga on 24 Jun 2004 13:28 PDT

Larre,

Thank you for the detailed information!!!

One last question - what email address do you recommend I send the Google letter to?

Sincerely,

David

Clarification of Answer by larre-ga on 24 Jun 2004 13:37 PDT

Write to:

help@google.com

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Clarification of Answer by larre-ga on 24 Jun 2004 13:55 PDT

I also have two recommendations for you. One an excellent newsletter, the other, a step-by-step program to grow your site into a very profitable one, without the need for any questionable tactics.

High Rankings Advisor | Jill Whalen
<http://www.highrankings.com/advisor.htm>

Webmaster World | Successful Site in 12 Months with Google Alone
<http://www.webmasterworld.com/forum10003/2010.htm>

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Request for Answer Clarification by d_springer-ga on 24 Jun 2004 14:08 PDT

Thanks Larre! I truly appreciate all of your advice!!!

What kind of tip did you have in mind taking for granted that I have a non-income producing Internet business at the moment & a requirement for large quantities of medication. => Pity factor :)

Clarification of Answer by larre-ga on 24 Jun 2004 14:32 PDT

Putting me on the spot. :)

I have no requirements, David. I provided an Answer for the face value of the question. You're welcome to tip or not -- either way, it's pleasure to provide useful information to a new GA customer!

---larre

d_springer-ga rated this answer:★★★★★ and gave an additional tip of: \$25.00

Absolutely top-notch answer! Very quick replies.

Comments

Subject: **Re: My site has disappeared from Google - I need guidance.**

From: [larre-ga](#) on 24 Jun 2004 15:06 PDT

Awww, t'anks :))) For the kind words, rating, and generous tip.

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