

BY APRIL WILSON

Author Rank and SEO

These days, Search Engine Optimization is focused on depth of expertise and valuable content. The meta-tags and HTML code that live behind your website are no longer of key importance to search engines—in fact, it can actually hurt your ranking if you haven't changed your SEO strategy to reflect the new focus on subject matter expertise. In this article, we'll look at another important component of a solid SEO strategy: author rank.

WHAT IS AUTHOR RANK?

Author rank is a phrase originally used by Google+ to denote a person who has published content on multiple quality websites. The premise is that if you are truly a subject matter expert on a certain topic, you are asked to write about that topic for high-traffic, high-quality websites. In Google+, you can showcase your subject matter expertise by adding to your profile (under Profile, Links) the websites for which you contribute content. Remember, Google will crawl these websites to validate that you

have contributed content to them. To be considered a current contributor, make sure you have published in the last six months on any websites you list.

HOW AUTHOR RANK WORKS

Your Google+ ID is a long string of numbers associated with your profile. Think of it as your Google Social Security number. This number is associated with all the content you post—so if you do contribute to several websites, you will want to make sure they are including your Google+ ID in their code (it looks something like this: /110412540089011112345).

Most people don't understand Google+ because it's not as popular as Facebook and other social sites. You may have to educate the websites where you post content to make sure they include this snippet of code on all of your work: `<rel="author" link="your-googleplus-url" />`.

THE AUTHOR RANK IMPACT ON SEO

In addition to considering them a more "trustworthy" source, Google will rank articles authored by experts higher in the search results pages than articles by unknown authors for the same keywords or topics. A side bonus is that the author's photo appears with the search results, which tends to produce higher clicks in many usability click tests.

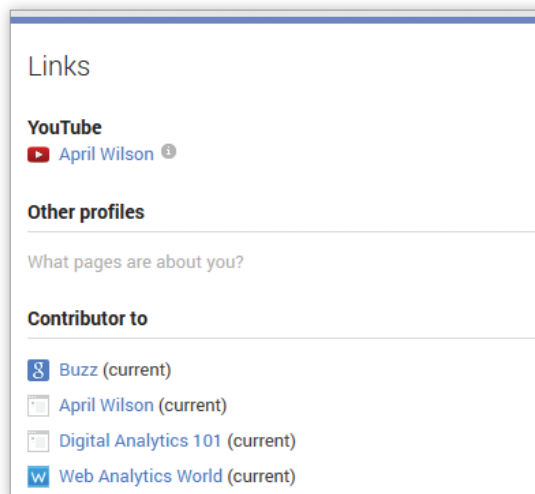
It's not just Google, either. Not to be outdone, Bing has partnered with an authority ranking website called Klout. If experts answer questions on Klout, their Bing ranking improves by default. The same principle also applies to Yahoo! If an author contributes to any of the Yahoo! content sections, Yahoo! will automatically rank that author higher in the search results.

THE TAKEAWAY

If you have subject matter expertise in a certain area, the first place you want to post it is obviously to your own website so that you can grow your database and interested lead lists. However, the next step is to look for other authorship or expertise-sharing opportunities to improve your own website's SEO.

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To improve your author rank, edit your Google+ profile to include a list of websites for which you provide content (right). Adding your Google+ ID to your content means your image will display in search results (below), which tends to produce higher click rates.



[I've been working on polishing off my personal website and doing ...](https://plus.google.com/110412540089011126948/.../JJd67ruT...)



<https://plus.google.com/110412540089011126948/.../JJd67ruT...>
April Wilson

Jan 15, 2013 - If you're interested in digital analytics, social media marketing, or data science, please subscribe :). April E Wilson - Digital Marketing and Analytics Strategy Expert

/TECH/

Personal Dashboard

BY JOE STODDARD

Nothing is handier than having the information that you need to get through the day available on a single, organized screen on your computer or tablet. Conventional software, like Microsoft Office and QuickBooks, has been offering this “dashboard” view for a long time. But now, thanks to the “cloud,” you can build your own dashboard to consolidate all kinds of information—from your calendar, email, and to-do lists to weather and news from the Internet. Having it all on one screen can save you hours of surfing to different websites and blogs to find what you’re looking for.

For years I relied on iGoogle to help contractors create their personal dashboards. Unfortunately, Google discontinued the free service last November, leaving us scrambling. I’ve located a half-dozen good alternatives that do pretty much the same things in pretty much the same way iGoogle did. But there are subtle differences (like the ability to share a page with your clients or subs, for example) that may make you choose one over the others.

A GOOD DASHBOARD

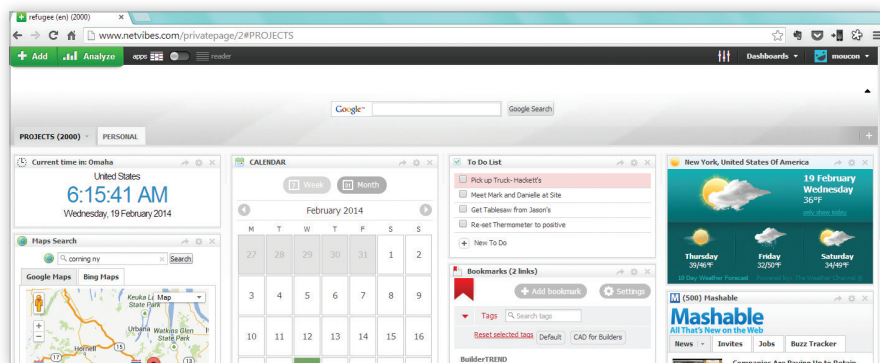
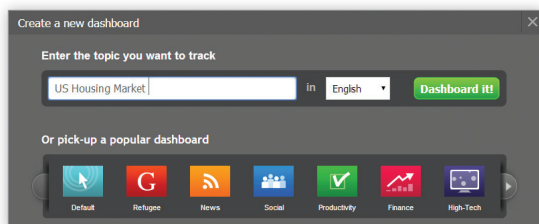
I looked for iGoogle replacements that had most, if not all, of the following features:

- Free service (usually ad-supported) and an optional paid version without ads;
- Multiple pages or tabs—such as Productivity, Business, and Personal—organized however you want;
- Multiple ways to display information on the same page (for example, gadgets, widgets, and older-style RSS feeds);
- Customizable look and feel (user can change colors and fonts, and the size and location of the gadgets or widgets);
- At least near-real-time information that automatically refreshes as new information becomes available;
- Ability to work in all major browsers, including those on phones and tablets;
- Ability to make some pages public (for sharing with clients or subs), while keeping others behind a password.

NETVIBES

This dashboard is a spin-off from the

Enter a topic keyword into Netvibes (right) and it scours the Web to find matching content. Netvibes can create a dashboard layout (below) similar to that of the old iGoogle.



Drive

Wood Deck Screws

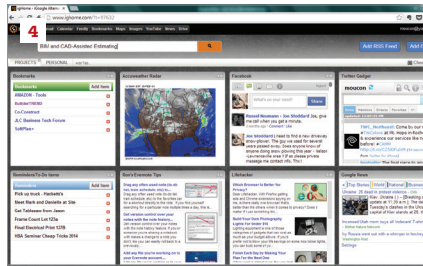
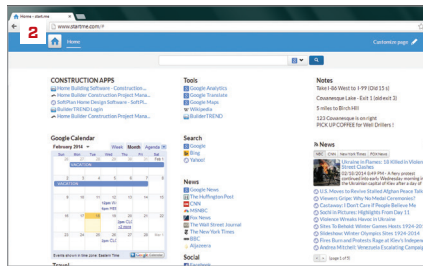
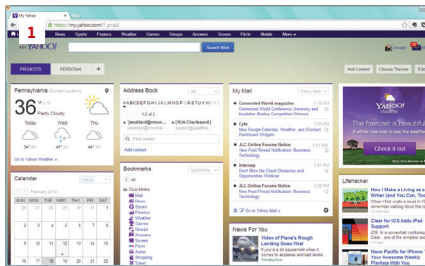
DSV: fast-starting deck screw for fastening preservative-treated wood decks



Not Your Ordinary Fastener

- Up to 35% more screws driven per battery charge
- Countersinks cleanly with under-head nibs
- Withstands swelling and shrinkage with fast-growth lumber
- Quik Guard® coating provides added corrosion resistance

SIMPSON
Strong-Tie
strongtie.com/deckcenter



company's core reputation-management business. Instead of creating pages one widget at a time, you simply type in the topic you want to follow and Netvibes does the rest, scouring the Internet for whatever information it can locate and organize on that particular topic (see screen shots on previous page). From there, you can edit your pages, changing the content, theme, and layout to your heart's content. Netvibes also has extensive options for sharing your pages by email or on social media. Free; \$3.50/month with "VIP support." Premium version (\$499/month) manages all social media and other Web activity. netvibes.com

MY YAHOO

The simplest of the free-with-ads options, MyYahoo (1) is geared toward people who are already using Yahoo mail, address book, or calendar. There is no paid version, so you're always stuck with an ad in the upper right-hand corner of your page (which even the best ad-blockers would not nuke). Yahoo makes it easy to create additional tabs and organize feeds any way you like, but the "Add Content" button limits you to categories Yahoo makes available. My Yahoo is strictly private—there's no way to share content unless you give up your password (bad idea). Free with ads; no paid version. my.yahoo.com

STARTME

In addition to using dedicated one-topic widgets, StartMe (2) also lets you add widgets containing RSS feeds or URL Lists, then reorganize everything on the page. The drag-and-drop interface makes it easy to create public or private pages, each of which can hold different content. For example, you could set up a page with links to your preferred product manufacturers and make that available to clients and prospects. But you can also create a private page to hold your personal email and social media accounts. StartMe also lets you add productivity widgets, such as your calendar and to-do list. Free; no paid version. startme.com

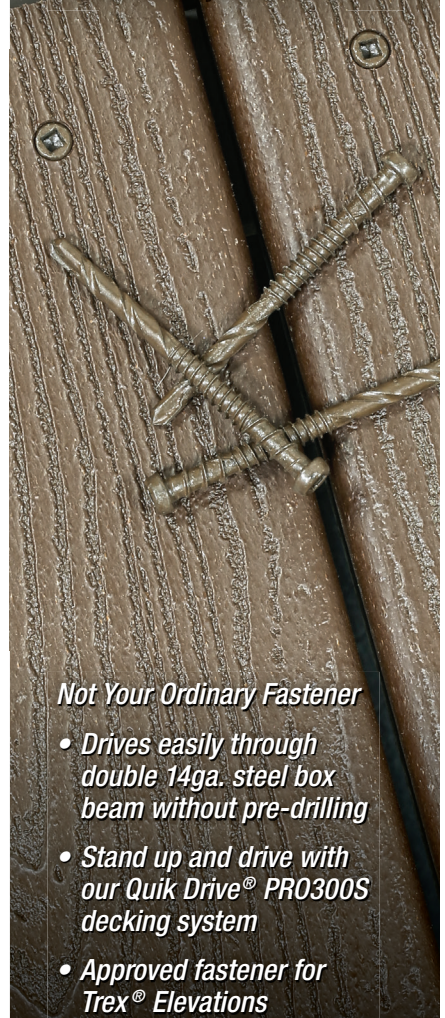
PROTOPAGE

This dashboard is my current favorite, mostly because it's so configurable (3). It's the only service in this bunch that allows you to change not only the location of a specific widget, but also its width. If you need something wider so you can read more of it without scrolling (your email, for example), it's no problem. Unlike with the other services mentioned here, you're not locked into pre-set columns—widgets and gadgets spanning multiple columns can intermix with single-column versions anywhere on the page. Free with ads; \$2.49/month without ads. protopage.com

Drive

Composite Deck Screws

DCSD: durable deck screw for fastening composite decking to steel and aluminum deck-frame systems



Not Your Ordinary Fastener

- Drives easily through double 14ga. steel box beam without pre-drilling
- Stand up and drive with our Quik Drive® PRO300S decking system
- Approved fastener for Trex® Elevations

SIMPSON

Strong-Tie

strongtie.com/deckcenter

BLUEG

Like Netvibes, BlueG helps you out by setting up your initial pages for you based on some selections you make when you first sign up. BlueG is free, but you'll have to put up with at least one shopping gadget (Amazon, for example) on each page. BlueG maintains a gadget library, including a "By Google" category that claims to have all your old, favorite iGoogle gadgets waiting for you. BlueG hints (but never outright admits) that the "Google" gadgets were created by the old team of Google gadget developers. Free (shopping gadget can be deleted). No paid version (but donations encouraged). blueg.com

IGHOME

This dashboard, whose name stands for "iGoogle-Home," was created by Mike Sutton, an iGoogle gadget developer who wanted to re-create the iGoogle experience

for himself and others (4). The service is free, but there is a link for a PayPal donation at the bottom of the page. In the same way that My Yahoo is geared toward Yahoo users, igHome is geared toward Google Drive/Apps users, with links to most popular Google services (Gmail, Drive, YouTube) available across the top of the interface. Not surprisingly, of the dashboards in this article, igHome is closest to the old iGoogle in terms of features and functionality. For those of you who want to replicate your old iGoogle pages exactly or just need more help organizing your igHome setup, there is a comprehensive set-up guide independently maintained at saveigoogle.org/going-home-ighome. Free with persistent PayPal donation link. ighome.com

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/HR/

Have Job, Will Travel

WHAT HAPPENED

Good Guys Construction Co. allows employees to travel to the shop the night before to pack the tools and supplies they need for the next day. That way, employees can drive from their homes directly to the jobsite in the morning. Employees are not paid for their evening travel time to the shop; they are paid from the time they arrive at the jobsite to the time they leave. All employees have agreed to this policy.

WHY IT'S WRONG

When employees travel from home directly to the jobsite, they are not required to be paid for this time. This is the case with the morning commute of Good Guys Construction's employees from their homes to the jobsite. Where Good Guys Construction violates Wage and Hour regulations is in how they handle the time employees spend in the evening

driving from the jobsite to the shop. Since employees are not leaving the jobsite to go directly home but are instead first stopping at the shop, this time would be considered hours worked and needs to be paid. Once the employee leaves the shop to return home, driving time would be unpaid.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Carefully review your hours worked and payroll procedures. Understand that travel time during the regular workday typically needs to be paid, unless the employee is directly leaving from or returning to home. Even if employees agree to another arrangement that is contrary to Wage and Hour regulations, the Department of Labor will enforce this law.

Douglas Delp is founder of The Delp Group (delpgroup.com), which provides human resources services to small businesses.

Drive

Stainless-Steel Deck Screws

DWP: resilient deck screw for fastening wood decks in coastal and high-exposure areas



Not Your Ordinary Fastener

- Available in Type-316 stainless steel for maximum corrosion resistance
- Greatly reduces torque with "box" thread design for easy driving
- 6-lobe prevents driver-bit cam-out and minimizes drive time

SIMPSON**Strong-Tie**strongtie.com/deckcenter