# (Updated) eCollegeFinder.org Site Traffic Analysis

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According to Searchengineland.com, if a site doesn’t rebound in traffic after April 19th, 2012 that site was affected by Panda 3.5. Main reasons include sites using databases to aggregate information, press portal and aggregators, or heavily template websites. With DMi utilizing an in house CMS and most, if not all pages on ECF have the same templates for content and page layout, there is no doubt that eCollegeFinder.org’s search rank was affected by by Panda 3.5.

Panda 3.5 and Penguin 1.0 were released within one week of each other in April 2012. The reason why panda 3.5 matters over Penguin 1.0 is eCollegeFinder isn’t a site dedicated to spam, which was the intention of Penguin—to punish spam and its redirects. Were as Panda’s main objection is to target content that gives off a spam aroma— the idea is to promote useful, organic content users actually want instead of creating content for optimization purposes.

After analyzing ECF’s weekly keyword rank, ECK’s keywords have done nothing but loose in rank with little gains in between. The timing of Google announcing an updates is based on when the algorithm is completely through Google’s systems.

* On April 19, 2012 Panda 3.5 was announced. Non-paid search traffic was 427 hits.
* May 25th, 2012 Penguin 1.0 was announced. Non-search traffic was 235 hits.
* Lowest weekday of traffic was June 11th, 2013. Non-search traffic was 76 hits.

**T**he takeaway is to continue blog posting and link building. Blog post should be optimized before publishing. The style of content present must diversify in order to improve ranking on Google. How ECF presents content to its users is the same across all channels- course catalog, institution pages, resources, blog posts, the likes. ECF’s content isn’t ‘organic’ enough for the Google. An example is the ECF Blog Award Series. Each award, whether it’s the sports blog award or best writing award, the textual content is template, just like the rest of the site.

Moreover, a widely used tactic for gaining traffic is guest blogging on other sites. Rand Fishkin (former Moz CEO) hinted at a possible future Google update that will target SEO specialist who guest blog purely for link building purposes. This update could take the form of a future Panda update.

The takeaway is to ensure the content being posted is high in quality and is posted on a well ranking site. I want to emphasize quality links over quantity of links. What not to do includes guest blogging for whom ever takes content and automating guest blog posting. I recommend staying away from Myblogguest.com and harbor relationships with PR sites, News affiliates, and the traffic building service Tom mentioned in our last meeting.

Finally, DMi should focus its link building efforts on utilizing backlinks from its search engine competitors. I found this tactic very affective for eCollegeFinder because some outstanding links were obtained from ECF’s competitors

* Sources
  + <http://searchengineland.com/penguin-update-recovery-tips-advice-119650>
  + <http://searchengineland.com/winners-losers-from-googles-webspam-update-119493>
  + <http://moz.com/blog/guest-posting-blogging-slippery-slope-whiteboard-friday>

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| **All Visits** | 502713 |
| **Non-paid Search Traffic** | 296302 (59%) |
| **Paid Search Traffic** | 23462 (5%) |
| **Data Source** | Google Analytics |
| **Date Range** | Jan 1, 2011 - Jan 1, 2014 |