



How I Got 70,000 Useless Visitors To My Site In One Day! (One Internet Marketer's Analysis of Social Bookmark Traffic) Copyright © 2007 Titus Hoskins

Recently, a page on one of my websites was bookmarked or listed on Digg, a popular social bookmark site. It gave me the perfect opportunity to study and analyze the traffic coming from these social media sites. Read to discover the advantages and disadvantages of social bookmark traffic and how it can be applied to your own online marketing or site.

Is Social BookMark Traffic Useless?

First, we must make the distinction that no traffic is useless. Any visitor to your site is a good thing and should be welcomed. However, all traffic is not created equally, there are great differences in the sources of your traffic. This article takes a close analytical look at social bookmark traffic from an internet marketing perspective.

In case you haven't noticed, right now social bookmark and media sites are all the rage on the web. Social bookmark traffic comes from such popular sites as Slashdot, Digg, Stumbleupon... basically these sites are driven by their users - that is, users or members pick and bookmark the content they want to view and discuss.

These social bookmark sites are extremely popular; they command the high traffic numbers most ordinary sites can only dream about obtaining.

But is this social bookmark traffic useful?

Is it worth your time? Should you be actively promoting to these social media sites? Is social bookmark traffic of any use to the affiliate marketer? Should you concentrate your online marketing efforts on these types of sites? More importantly, what are the benefits and disadvantages of getting a front page listing on a sites like Digg or Stumbleupon?

As a full-time online marketer I wanted to know the answers to those questions. Moreover, I wanted to discover how or if I could use these sites from an online marketer's advantage; i.e. how can they help me create more online income.

Recently, the Digg listing gave me a first-hand opportunity to really study these sites.

Of course, nothing happens without a reason... I did actually court these social bookmark sites by placing the free Addthis.com bookmark on all my pages. You can do the same. This simple bookmark lets your visitors bookmark your content for you in all these sites; it only takes a few seconds to place the bookmark code on your webpages.

But be careful; getting your site featured on the front page of these sites can drive

100,000's of visitors to your site immediately, so much traffic that it may overtax your server and crash it.

So be warned; if you're actively promoting to these social bookmark sites just make sure your servers or web hosting is up to the demanding task of handling all these sudden visitors.

In my case, it didn't crash my servers but unfortunately, the page/link in question featured an old poorly written article I did on the history of the Internet. It was just some random facts and things about the web, not really an article at all. Why it was even featured on Digg is a puzzle and beyond me.

But still I am not one to waste an opportunity, so I put my Google Analytics into overdrive and starting analyzing these visitors and social bookmark traffic.

It pointed out some very interesting factors about this social bookmark traffic.

Most of this traffic will:

- * **simply bounce back**
- * **very few visitors will spend much time on your site**
- * **very few visitors will even venture into your site**
- * **very few will sign-up to your newsletter**
- * **very few will enter your marketing follow-ups/funnels**

(The unknown variable here being the content on your site, how good it is? How well does it perform?)

Regardless, one common problem with traffic from these sites, it's very temporary traffic. The high volume will only last a few days... until your item is moved back from the front page.

These visitors will not stay on your site long and most are gone within seconds, never to be seen again. A few may sign up to your newsletter or venture to other areas of your site but not many.

Social bookmark traffic is very fleeting, like customers in the drive-thru section in a fast food restaurant, they grab the content and surf back to the major linking site very quickly and surf on to the next item.

This traffic will behave very differently than organic traffic from the search engines, or from your newsletter traffic or from traffic in your marketing funnels. Much different.

It was unlike getting one of my articles featured in Addme or SiteProNews, where I can easily get 200 or 300 new subscribers in a day. Plus, these visitors are interested in my information and have been exposed to my content (article) before coming to my site.

So there was no comparison; I would take the traffic from these sites any day over traffic from the social bookmark sites. And I would take free organic traffic from the search engines over any other source of traffic including PPC traffic.

So the question remains - is social bookmark traffic useless?

First, as I mentioned before, you must realize no traffic is useless; any visitors to your site

is a good thing. Without traffic your site is worthless, just a few files sitting on a server in the middle of nowhere.

Obtaining visitors is one of your first objectives as a webmaster. You have to get visitors to your site or it's game over.

The best kind of traffic is traffic coming from organic search, visitors who come from the search engines seeking exactly what you're offering on your site. These are targeted visitors who will consider your offer, read your information, maybe buy a product or sign-up to your newsletter or follow-up system. They often become repeat visitors to your site. These are your ideal visitors. This is the kind of traffic you want.

Social bookmark/media traffic is different but it does have some saving graces.

Mainly it can help expose your site to millions and help brand your site or business. It can get the word out about your site. Start a buzz.

If you have a site that appeals to the mass market, then these social sites could be an excellent recruiting ground for visitors and traffic.

These social sites are good for another reason; getting your links on all these high traffic, high PR7 and PR8 sites can't hurt your search engine rankings. Once featured on a site like Digg, your link will appear on many secondary sites around the web, so far 500+ and counting. Monkey see, monkey do. Although it has never been my main ambition to get featured on Fark.com, all these sites do have high PR ranks so from a SEO standpoint it is not necessarily a bad thing.

Since many of these visitors will be using the Firefox browser which has the Alexa toolbar embedded - your site's traffic rank will increase. Over 50% of the bookmark traffic coming to my site were using the Firefox browser. Alexa's traffic rankings are not a true picture of the web's traffic but it's a good measuring stick, nonetheless.

Google might even consider it when ranking your site. Google basically considers their whole indexing system as a democratic voting structure... sites give a vote by linking to your content; wouldn't it also be reasonable to assume more traffic means more votes. So wouldn't getting a lot of traffic or being featured on a site like Digg where the users vote to propel the best content to the front be the ultimate vote.

One strange thing I did notice, for some reason the traffic from Stumbleupon was different. These visitors stayed longer on my site and reacted more like organic traffic. Maybe the Stumbleupon site is of a higher quality and this may have been reflected in the quality of the visitors coming from there. It also reminded me, all traffic from these social media sites can't be judged with the one brush.

This whole experience also pointed out another important factor; it made me realize how unsuited my content is for the general web surfer or the mainstream web. Just how much my online sites are geared towards marketing and selling. My main goal as an affiliate marketer is to gather leads and make sales for the companies and products I promote. All my sites and content were planned and organized to first draw in targeted (warmed up) visitors from free organic search and from my online articles.

If I or anyone wanted to take advantage of this social media traffic, you would have to create your site/content to appeal to these surfers and then somehow draw them into your marketing funnels. I don't know if the majority of the users of these bookmark sites would

make good prospects, but my guess is not very likely, the nature of the beast. But it would largely depend on what you're offering on your site and how well it is suited to these users.

So I am not drawing any conclusions yet.

Hopefully, I will have further chances to study traffic from these social sites and get the long-term effects, especially in regards to my keyword rankings in the search engines before making any final judgments.

For now I will keep an open mind but the jury is still way out whether or not social bookmark traffic is worth the interruption to the daily marketing tasks of your site. Just seems like much ado about nothing.



The author is a full-time online marketer who has numerous websites, including two sites on Internet marketing. For the latest and most effective web marketing tools try: [Internet Marketing Tools](#) Or why not try these excellent free training manuals and videos: [Free Marketing Courses](#) Copyright © 2007 Titus Hoskins. This article may be freely distributed if this resource box stays attached.

PostScript:

Boy, when I get it wrong, I get it wrong. Actually, traffic from these social media sites is fleeting and won't deliver much after your posting moves from the front pages. However, in regards to obtaining top rankings for your keywords (especially in the only search engine that really matter - Google) nothing beats getting a front page listing on Digg, Slashdot...

It has been over 6 months since the page described above was on Digg, and I am still listed in Google for the keywords "internet facts". This is not a phrase I had targeted but because of the Digg listing, my site pops up at #1 for that phrase. And it is not just the Digg listing, this page was picked up by countless other sites and featured - thus building many one-way links back to my site.

In checking out other keywords and phrases which I monitor, I soon realized how extremely important these listings are to Google. You can virtually jump-start or propel your keywords into the #1 listings by getting your content on these social media sites.

Your #1 Marketing Strategy Should be Targeting These Sites for Your Main Keyword Phrases

Granted these media sites are popular and have high PR rankings but the amount of importance Google is placing on these sites is a little hard to believe... maybe I am letting my own personal feelings about these sites fog my judgment.

To me sites like Digg, Slashdot... always seems to me like the "National Enquirer on RSS" rather than anything to be taken seriously. They place too much emphasis on the "negative entertainment" element for my liking.

But this is definitely a case where you hold your nose and do everything in your power to court these social media sites... the #1 rankings are worth it.

It changes my viewpoint, hope it changes yours too. Don't ignore these social media sites when it comes to getting top rankings for your keywords; instead do everything you can to get your content and your keywords listed on these social media sites.