

SEO Metrics That Matter

A Visual Guide to Link Quality for People Who Are Faking It

By [@alexcornici](#) | [What is SEO](#)

What This Is

You know how everyone throws around terms like DA, TF, CF, and UGC like they're in some secret SEO cult?

This guide is your decoder ring. It's a simple reference to what actually matters when evaluating backlinks—minus the jargon, but with enough spice to burn off your bad link habits.

Keep this near your keyboard like a security blanket.

Section 1: The Big 4 Metrics (And Why You Should Care)

1. Domain Authority (DA)

What it is: Moz's score predicting how well a site will rank (0–100)

Why it matters: Higher = more likely Google trusts the site.

Reality Check: Everyone's obsessed with it, but it's just a guess, not gospel.

If you're linking to a DA 6 site from 2011 with broken CSS: stop.

2. Page Authority (PA)

What it is: Like DA, but for the specific URL

Why it matters: A blog post on a high-DA site can still be trash. This tells you if the actual page carries weight.

Use it when: You want to know if that backlink is worth flexing in a slide deck.

3. Trust Flow (TF)

What it is: Majestic's measure of link quality (0–100)

Why it matters: It tells you how “clean” and credible the site’s link network is.

High TF = good neighborhood. Low TF = meth lab behind a Wendy’s.

4. Citation Flow (CF)

What it is: A measure of how many links point to a site, regardless of quality

Why it matters: High CF + low TF = spam city

Golden Ratio: TF should be at least half of CF. If not, run.

Section 2: Bonus Metrics People Pretend to Understand

Spam Score (Moz)

High = suspicious. Too high = kiss your rankings goodbye.

You know when you land on a site and instantly feel like you need antivirus? That.

Referring Domains

Quality over quantity. 50 real sites > 500 junk directories from 2003.

If you’re bragging about “2K backlinks” and they’re all from coupon sites, congratulations—you’ve built a landfill.

Anchor Text

Variety is key.

If every link to your page says “best deals on pressure washers,” Google thinks you’re a robot in a trench coat.

Dofollow vs. Nofollow

- Dofollow: Passes link equity (SEO juice)
- Nofollow: Doesn’t, but still useful for traffic and variety

Treat nofollow links like vegetables: not exciting, but healthy in moderation.

Link Placement

In-content > footer/sidebar

If your link is in the footer next to “Privacy Policy” and “Contact Us,” Google’s already asleep.

Section 3: The Link Quality Gut Check

Run every backlink through this sniff test. If the answer is “no” to most of these, you’ve been link-catfished.

- Does this site get real organic traffic?
 - Is the link naturally placed inside useful content?
 - Is the surrounding page even relevant to my topic?
 - Is the site indexed and ranking in Google?
 - Is this a site I’d be embarrassed to show on a slide in front of coworkers?
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Section 4: Tools That Won’t Make You Cry

Here’s a cheat sheet of tools that help you spot bad backlinks and stalk good ones.

| Tool | What It Does |
|----------|--|
| Ahrefs | Backlink profile, anchor text, referring domains |
| Moz | DA/PA, spam score, linking root domains |
| Majestic | Trust Flow, Citation Flow |

SEMrush

Backlink audit, toxic link detection

Google Search Console

See who links to you, how, and how bad it is

Pro tip: If a “link builder” sends you a report without any of these, they are not your friend.

Section 5: Real-Life Example (Let’s Roast One)

Imagine this:

You just got a backlink. Time to pop champagne?

Hold on.

- The site has DA 8
- TF is 2, CF is 40
- The page is about forex trading, and your post is about homemade dog food
- Anchor text is “click here”
- You’re listed next to three casino sites and a weird link to someone’s Etsy store

Conclusion: That’s not a backlink. That’s a liability.

Final Words: Don’t Build Trash. Don’t Buy Trash. Don’t Be Trash.

If your backlink strategy is just “get as many links as possible,” you’re the SEO version of someone filling a bookshelf with books they haven’t read.

Link quality is everything. One solid backlink is worth more than fifty pity clicks from expired domains.

This guide won't make you smart—but it will make you dangerous.
