

Chiropractic Alliances on the Internet: Helping Decide Who Wins

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"The internet is like the world's biggest library, with all the books scattered on the floor." - anonymous

That a comment was made about the internet in its early days. It was this concern that drove the development of search engines and portals that acted as guides to the billions of pages of information on line.

In the last three years, the "library" has begun to develop into a more organized system. Certain websites have become household words, while millions of sites remain generally unknown. In contrast, the latest demand for "additional funding" has found some sites abandoning the web entirely. Disney's Toysmart.com, Whirlpool's Brandwise.com and Early Craft Store's CraftShop.com were three well-developed internet sites that disappeared into digital darkness with barely a whisper. Industry analysts are predicting that these three are just the first of a long list of commercial websites that will go out of business in the near future.

Going back to our analogy of the web being the world's biggest library, technological developments are empowering existing websites to "vote" for the best sites and provide better placement on many internet search engines and directories. What is being monitored is the number of "links" from each website to others. This number is being used to better calculate the true popularity of a particular website.

This factor empowers every person with a website to "vote" for their favorite websites by placing links to those sites on their site. This gives you a certain amount of power over which sites will be most often referred to when someone is looking for information.

As has been reported in the past, there are literally millions of health-related web pages. Most of these are medical in nature, and few would be considered "pro-chiropractic." And while we can rejoice when an anti-chiropractic website goes down in flames, we can also "vote" for those sites that are pro-chiropractic, or at least include chiropractic as an appropriate choice.

Before we start looking outside the profession, there are certain chiropractic websites that should be the first links included on your site. In addition to ChiroWeb.com, your national and state chiropractic association websites, chiropractic college websites, and other chiropractic sites should be included on your links page.

Look at sites you feel provide accurate health information and check to see how they portray chiropractic:

- Do they include a section on chiropractic?
- Is it accurate information?
- Do they have a DC who writes for them?

- Do they have links to the larger chiropractic websites?
- What else could they offer that would better present chiropractic to their visitors?

Most websites are aware of the value of links to their site. Many are quite willing to add information about chiropractic and links to chiropractic sites. We (ChiroWeb.com) have developed extensive sections presenting the benefits of chiropractic on unformatted pages on our website. These pages are unformatted so that other websites can add their own "look and feel" to our pages, and thus present a substantial amount of information about chiropractic on their website just by accessing our pages.

Don't be afraid to contact the webmaster and ask them about adding chiropractic content to their site. If they ask for a resource, please give them my e-mail address. The more information we have on the more sites the better. Likewise, don't be afraid to suggest that they add links to chiropractic sites. If you really like the site, you may even want to volunteer to provide some content for them. You'd be surprised at how many sites will be happy to add chiropractic with a little help.

The internet is all about information. The more chiropractic information we get out there, the more people will learn about the benefits of chiropractic and be compelled to seek chiropractic care.

As websites come and go, you will have numerous opportunities to affect their content. The internet is somewhat like a gigantic library, but in this case, each book tells the reader which books to read next.

Let's make sure that as people browse through the web, they don't miss reading the *Book of Chiropractic*.

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