
Software Times™ Files...

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The Weird World of the Web

Now I'm starting to learn the real ins and outs of search engine placement and what a **Weird World the Web** is. To give you an example, a few months ago I set up reciprocal links with a site but when I check my stats I don't see any traffic coming from their place. Could they have dropped our listing? I visit their site and the page where we are supposed to appear comes up blank -- no head, no foot and nothing in between. I have a look at the underlying HTML source code and there is nothing there, just an utterly blank page!

You might wonder why they haven't fixed the page and after thinking about it a bit you realize that they don't know it's broken. It's not that they are ignoring an error, the error is never generated because my hit finds a page which happens to be blank and the system dutifully sent me the requested blank page. Error code 200!

So I compose and send a "Dear Webmaster" e-mail and 12 hours later I get a "Thank you!" note and their site is fixed and now I can get traffic from them again. My site is tiny and I can keep most of the details in my head. How do they handle it with huge, multimillion hit sites?

Just a few days ago I hadn't even heard of **Keyword Density**. Now they are killing me! Our marina is in Venezuela. Venezuela has about one thousand miles of Caribbean shoreline, more than most Caribbean islands, yet people don't think about Venezuela as part of the Caribbean. For them, Venezuela is South America.

In my search for key words for our pages I happen upon "haul-out." Every sailor must haul out his boat every year or two to scrape the bottom and to apply fresh anti fouling paint, there is no getting around it. Sailors will search for marinas and boatyards in the Caribbean to perform this ritual. So I test Google with "Caribbean haul-out" and we are nowhere to be found. At the very top are some of the well known boatyards -- not marinas -- such as

Peake's in Trinidad. Since in people's minds Venezuela is not in the Caribbean I decide to test Google with "Venezuela haul-out," surely we rank there. This time some of the ranking pages are articles written by Caribbean sailors about their Caribbean cruises. Here is a typical entry:

*During recent years, Trinidad has rapidly expanded its yacht service industry. Besides Humming Bird Marine, there are several storage yards, yacht clubs, and related industries concentrated around the northwest tip of Trinidad in Chaguaramas and Carenage Bay. **Stories of increased crime in Venezuela** have swelled the number of American yachts that came to Trinidad this year to repair or safely store their boats on the hard while they fly home for the summer. And who can blame them. I mean, where else in the English-speaking world can you hire a laborer for US\$2 an hour, rent a car for \$15 a day, have a good meal for \$2.50 and find virtually any item for your boat in the local chandleries? If it's not on the shelves, Marine Warehouse brings in a weekly container from Miami stuffed with duty-free orders from West Marine. Haulout rates seem reasonable at US\$5 per foot including five days on the hard and launching, **although the yard storage fees and marina dockage are steeper than Venezuela.***

Here is another one:

*All in all, if you're planning to **haul out in Venezuela**, try Carriacou first, it's on the way and it's just as cheap.*

<http://www.islandhopping.com/news.html>

It's enough to make you want to cry! :crying

How did these entries get such high rankings? They are lengthy articles with good content that rank high in **Keyword Density**.

But there are useful entries for us as well. Here is what entry No. 3 has to say:

The majority of cruising yachts that need work done choose Puerto La Cruz where there are haulout facilities and spare parts can be obtained. Puerto La Cruz has now become the boating capital of Venezuela as far as foreign vessels are concerned, due to the good shipyards and marinas that have opened in recent years.

Entry No. 2 even links to us!

[Venezuela](#)

... Many yachtspeople visit Venezuela to haul out and refit their vessels. One of the big advantages of hauling here is that the coastal ...
www.doyleguides.com/venezuela.htm - 4k - Cached - Similar pages

But there is another side to the coin, the unexpected in your favor! The page with the second most hits after the index page is [our marina directory page](#). After considering why this might be so I decided that it has good content and high keyword density. The content comes from the large number of marinas listed and the keyword density comes from the blurbs that accompany reciprocal links to other marina directories. It turns out that by writing advertising copy for our competitors we create "keyword density" for ourselves!

We have several other pages that can take advantage of this curious fact. Where before I was turning down advertising copy thinking it was gauche to give away free ads, now I will seek them out. Just think, for most marinas that we list I can safely state that they "haul out in the Caribbean." All of a sudden, we, who are not even considered part of the Caribbean, can have the highest keyword density for "Caribbean haul out."

Truly the **Weird World** of the **Web**!

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PD: Since I wrote this piece, Google has ranked us as number 1 for **Caribbean haul out**, and for **catamaran haul out**. I feel very proud of that!

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