

## ***Google Panda Updates Make Unique Legal Content More Valuable***

Since February, Google has been releasing a series of updates to their search engine ranking system (they are not calling the updates an algorithm change) that has affected numerous websites. The updates are called “Google Panda”. A couple of weeks ago, they released Google Panda 2, and last week they released what is being called Google Panda 2.2. Law firms' websites are experiencing a negative impact due to this update.

The update targets content farms and websites with heavy amounts of duplicate pages. The most noticeably affected websites were eHow and Wikihow – basically websites that publish content that has been previously published elsewhere.

On Friday, June 24, we released a press release endorsing the new changes and pointing out that our clients were not affected by the update. However, we are making changes to our marketing plans to make sure our clients continue to not face negative consequences for any future changes. Here is what you can do to avoid losing positions over Google Panda 2.2 and other upgrades to come.

**1) Link to Articles, Don't Publish Them** – When you come across an interesting article, your website will be better served linking to it. If you copy the article and paste it into your blog, you are now duplicating content. This is the very practice Google is discouraging with these recent updates. Of course, you can still get unique content out of linking to existing content by writing a blog entry related to the story. Write a summary about the story, why you found it interesting, and your point of view about the article's topic. Then link to the story. Google likes seeing the websites you link out to and even uses that as an indicator for the quality of your website.

**2) Avoid Shortcuts** – Be it link exchange schemes, copy and pasted content, or link wheels, avoid doing things for your website that promise fast ranking improvements. While your competitors may enjoy a brief raise to the top, eventually Google will create a patch that will cause the website to drop off the top. It is better to take the steady course that will yield long term benefits and progressive position enhancements.

**3) Scribacious Lawyers Do Best** – The moral of this update is that Google wants more content and they are tired of reading the same thing on different websites. Keeping an active stream of well written content flowing into your website will be rewarded with favorable rankings. So keep track of topics that come to mind and make your law firm's website a library of useful information.

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