

# Chapter 12: What Can Be Better Than Backlinks? I Can Think of Two Things I'd Rather Have

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Many people think the more backlinks the better, and that is simply not true. If it were a matter of the more backlinks I had the better my site or my landing page would rank, it would become a matter of whoever has the most money wins.

For \$60 a year I can buy domain names and cheap hosting from various providers, throw up some relevant (this is important) content and link back to myself. The end result would be whoever has the most increments of \$60 dollars wins.

The best content is content that satisfies the query of the reader and is not, should not, and must not be dependent on who has paid the most money. It might be that the guy who paid the most has the right answer, but it is not necessarily true that he who has the most money is always right. Search engines have already cracked down on this and will continue to do so. Beware of trying to buy more backlinks.



How Google Sees Content

What is important is who links to you, specifically influencers. People who have been around the block, those who have earned their right to be thought leaders. When thought leaders speak of you, your page, or your post, you are getting somewhere. When they link to you, refer to you, you are getting some mojo. But even references from thought leaders, good as they are, are not the best criteria for what is good. With that being said, there are better indicators of quality than links.

## How The Best Content is Determined

Readers should determine who has the best content, who has satisfied their query the best, not writers or webmasters.

I can think of two ways for readers to decide.

### 1. Comments From Real People

A lot of relevant comments on an article/post/page will give your content some serious love and ranking, as well as the voice of the reader.

Although comments can be bought as well, it is a lot harder to do. Getting real people to leave their name, a real email address and an outgoing link back to a real site (preferably relevant by content) is hard to do. **That's why comments are great to have.** Each time a comment is left on your content, the search engine has to come back to find out what happened and re-index the article with the change resulting from the comment. The more often this happens, the better for the original piece = higher ranking. Given a choice between someone linking to my site and someone leaving a relevant comment, I will take the comment.

### 2. A Google+ and Comment

Search engines are stupid. Search bots cannot read and make a subjective determination that the content is good. Search engines are smart. They can do basic math really well. When someone with a Google Authorship account gives me a Google+ and sends out a comment to their circle of people who might have a genuine interest in my content, that's really good love.

Search engines cannot make subjective determinations, but real readers can. Real readers who have a history of writing on a topic that is relevant to your content can make a determination as to whether your content is good or not or at least relevant to the discussion. Real readers who interact and leave comments on other similar sites have a history of reading around and making determinations. **The more comments you receive from real people the better.** Google is quite smart to encourage authors to register and to want readers to use the Google+ button. These readers and pushers are doing what Google search bots cannot. They are making subjective determinations on the quality of the article. The more this happens, the better the search engines can rank good content.

Given a choice between a backlink and a Google+ from someone in my field who has a Google Authorship account and their comment sent to their circles, I'll take the latter every time.

Can this be faked? Not very easily.

## Chapter Conclusion

Write good content that real people in your niche like to read. Encourage relevant comments and interaction on your site. Get plussed, too. And your content will rank and go to market for you.

**Agree? Disagree? Have a different experience? Let me know in the comments below. I will respond first chance.**