

## [SEO Critique: Drive Your Website to the Top of Google](#)

This is a transcript of an interview between Travis Giggy of SmallBusinessVictory.com and Jeremy Hermanns of [SEOIntelligence.com](http://SEOIntelligence.com).

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**Travis Giggy:** ... today I'm joined with Jeremy Hermanns. Jeremy is a search engine specialist. I just finished doing an hour-long interview with Jeremy. It was mind blowing. I learned so much stuff on this and had reaffirmed so many things that I knew but forgot about SEO. Jeremy is a fountain of knowledge when it comes to SEO. What I'm going to do right now, this is a special for only people that are on my list for Small Business Victory. I asked people to submit their websites to my blog for a critique of their websites.

Now, we're going to run through these really quick but what Jeremy usually does is he charges a minimum of \$150 just to do a critique on your websites.

So if your website was chosen and you see it on here, this is extremely valuable stuff and you should definitely take into account everything that Jeremy said. If your website wasn't chosen or if you're just getting your website going, please pay very close attention to all of the factors that Jeremy is talking about while we go through this.

Because these are all of the things that are going to help your site to rank well or not at all on search engines like Google. This is free traffic so all you got to do is put in a little of your time.

All you got to do is just do a few things right and you can get free traffic from Google. So Jeremy, thanks a lot for joining me once again for these website critiques.

**Jeremy Hermanns:** My pleasure as always.

**Travis:** Alright Jeremy. I narrowed down from about 35 sites down to six sites and I sent you those URLs. What I'd like to do now is just to let you take it away and I am going to try and follow along with you on my screen capture software here, so that I can show people what you're looking at and how the mind of a fabulous SEO works when looking at a website. So go ahead and let's get rolling.

**Jeremy:** Sure. So just as kind of, I guess, a preface to the audience. I haven't seen these. I'm basically pulling these up right now. We pulled them up literally in between the taping of the previous show. The first one I have up is Errands Plus?

**Travis:** [typing] errandsplus.net.

**Jeremy:** So right there you can basically....

**Travis:** Whoa. Ah, it went to www dot. Oh. So well, I already found one interesting thing. errandsplus goes to a different place than errandplus. So that's...

**Jeremy:** Yeah. If you actually also... if you click on the "Home" button there you'll see that it's actually linking to /home.html. It looks like the home page is actually going to partner.net. You don't even have home.html.

**Travis:** I see.

**Jeremy:** I just saw that myself. I thought it was interesting.

**Travis:** OK. So that's definitely the first thing that needs to be fixed. This is...

**Jeremy:** Well, that's a duplicated content, and it's exactly... And you can link right there, Travis, as most people don't know about those things. So, you can do a lot of things right. One improper position of a very important thing like your top level domain of your home page, this could be a...

**Travis:** Sure. So what this is going to do is this is going to confuse Google where the home page is. Hey, what page do I need to put to in my search engine. The first thing, correct me if I'm wrong, that you need to do is to make sure that your linking structure goes to the proper pages.

**Jeremy:** Exactly. You're using a right URL structure. There are different names, canonical base of URLs. The way you have the URL sub-domain structure. The siphoning of the URL, but this is just basic. Make sure that you don't have two different URLs with the same content. sorry, duplicate content with different URLs. One of the worse ones to have it on is a home page.

**Travis:** Good, good. So what's the next thing that we look at?

**Jeremy:** Actually, going through, I like to really quickly look at the on page factors. How is this website built. That's going to help me see how is Google seeing this website. So what I like to do is actually pull up the source.

**Travis:** OK. Go in and do a right click and select "View page source"

**Jeremy:** I like to look for things that are important to a search engine spider. One of the main ones is in fact, what is this website about? You'll probably notice from the top of the Mozilla browser there, actually is no title on this website. So you may see the actual image on top, which is Errands Plus, very big and beautiful, you can understand that that's what they do. But the search engine spider doesn't know that.

So in the copy you probably see code that says "meta name, "robots", "keywords". There is no description and there is no title.

**Travis:** This webmaster needs to add the title tags and the description and those need to be on every page?

**Jeremy:** Exactly. You want to have it on every website or every web page that is indexed, because you want to tell Google what the topic and the description is.

**Travis:** OK. Fantastic.

**Jeremy:** In addition, again, if you have the opportunity, tell Google what the website is about. You want to take that opportunity, because, again, with no data, Google thinks this website is about puppy dog, because there's an image of a puppy dog, that's the last page. And you don't want that.

**Travis:** Nope, not if you are about Errands. You don't want to be a puppy dog.

**Jeremy:** So that's one of the main problems I saw. Just right off the bat is they're not telling Google what they're about, which is going to effect a lot of things like linking. People aren't going to find you in the search engine results page. You can bring this up as an example if you want to, but let's say you type in errandsplus.

**Travis:** OK. [typing] I got errandsplus.com.

**Jeremy:** Exactly. The only... but and you typed in "errand"?

**Travis:** I typed in with a plural.

**Jeremy:** Right. But you used errand?

**Travis:** Correct.

**Jeremy:** And you came up with another website which was errandsplus, correct?

**Travis:** Yes, that's correct.

**Jeremy:** That's an actual competition. So you're putting in the exact structure and name of this company, that's in the URL without the dot com. Just errandsplus, one word, and you're actually getting a competitor.

**Travis:** OK. There it is. So yeah. I see, "Did you mean 'errandsplus'? Top two results shown" and that is obviously not the website that we want.

**Jeremy:** Exactly. So we're going to ignore that, because we're actually looking for errandsplus but what title are you seeing? I'm seeing services.

**Travis:** Yes. I'm seeing "services".

**Jeremy:** There is no description so it looks more like email.

**Travis:** Oh gosh.

**Jeremy:** This information, you know, it's coming from...

**Travis:** Right. OK.

**Jeremy:** So right here you can see that this company, even if they did have a thousand search engine listings, they're all going to be basically unusable.

**Travis:** Because there's no title tags.

**Jeremy:** Exactly.

**Travis:** OK.

**Jeremy:** So you may think that, "Oh my website's OK and Google will get it right." Google only knows what you tell them.

**Travis:** Very true. Very true. Alright, Jeremy, let's move on to the next website here. I think that's good information for errandplus.net. It's satisfactory.

**Jeremy:** Sure. I have got Emily Wedding Planning Consultants. The URL is allaboutm-ewedding.com. Now that's a long URL but people, I mean don't be... The URL is secondary. People are linking to you for great content. People do not need to be able to directly type in a URL. If you have good content, they'll get that. So I don't want anybody chuckling. That really has nothing to do with how well this can get.

**Travis:** OK.

**Jeremy:** So I am going through. I am looking here. I am clicking around. We have a very similar situation. We have what looks to me like a [inaudible 08:57] where the home page, if you click on the home button, it is coming up default on HTML.

**Travis:** OK. I see that.

**Jeremy:** But you can also get the same page if you just delete the default HTML and just have the URL right here.

**Travis:** OK.

**Jeremy:** So this again is something that happens all the time. I shouldn't use all the time, because it happens to 20 to 30 percent of the clients that walk in our door. This is something that a web developer does and they don't think, they don't care, they use it for development and they don't realize that they hurt the website. You can do an easy model rewrite. You can change your IM server. There are things you can do that take no more than five minutes.

**Travis:** so basically what you are doing is you are telling Google that there are two pages that say exactly the same thing, and it just confusing them on which one they should be looking at more closely. Is that correct?

**Jeremy:** Even worse, let's say it did not confuse you. Let's say that somehow Google is really smart. Well, you then have the same content on two web pages. So they are going to actually penalize that content thinking that you're posting duplicates to make more page casts.

**Travis:** That's no good.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, you don't want that either.

**Travis:** Alright. Well, let's move on.

**Jeremy:** Yeah. So especially with these guys, I pulled up the page source as well.

**Travis:** Doing the same right now. New page source. OK.

**Jeremy:** And they actually have a couple of things that I consider I just wouldn't do and these are best practices. One of them is if you look at the title they have an ampersand title.

**Travis:** OK.

**Jeremy:** Now an ampersand is OK alone, but if you look it is actually mashed with M&E so there is no break or space. So what that means is M&E is one word and unless a person types in M&E it's one word. And basically what you can do is, M&E Weddings sounds like a brand name, which is great, but then they have M&E Weddings/Consultant, LLC.-home-. So I have seen a lot worse but it is one of those titles where I think we could clean it up very simply.

A recommendation I'd have is M and E weddings and actually spell out "and". If the branding of the ampersand needs to be there then just do M&E Weddings or M&E wedding planning and make it the proper phonetic phrase. Nobody is going to actually type in weddings.

It looks like weddings is what they mean to use because if you look on the home page it says "A fabulous, luxurious, stress free wedding awaits you at M&E Weddings. So I assume that that's how they have everything.

But if they are doing that they can just use M&E Wedding planning and try to rank for wedding planning. Which heck that is a huge thing to get on.

**Travis:** Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. If I were these folks I would consider rebranding to try to rank for that key word. That's a very very good point.

**Jeremy:** Exactly. You know an easy way to do that is put in wedding planning and put in wedding planning in the Google server tool that you can use for free, and then you will learn very quickly that there is a dramatic difference in the results.

**Travis:** OK. So we have got to a change that we need to make to the title tag here. Then what is the next tag that you would be looking at?

**Jeremy:** Sure. So the next one would be the description. Here is a really good description. I am really glad you have M&E as an example. This one is kind of fun. Basically, I am going to read the description for you. M&E wedding planning - Consultant, LLC. - Miami Beach, FL. True love belongs to you, so let us make your dream come true. M-. Wedding Planning. So it seems to me they tried to take something that may have belonged from a bunch of different marketing materials and cut and pasted it in there, and it really doesn't have a good flow. There's a bunch of things that they're limiting themselves. Again, they're not - it looks like they figured out "wedding planning" and put at the very end, after everything.

But then in addition to that, they have Miami, FL. Well, when I'm looking for a wedding planner, how often do you put in - if I'm living in Miami Beach, am I putting in "Miami Beach, FL wedding planner"?

**Travis:** Never.

**Jeremy:** I'm going to be putting in "Miami wedding planner, " I'm going to be putting in "Miami Beach wedding planner, " or maybe just doing "Florida wedding planners." Spell out "Florida" for instance. Don't put the state initials. The other point also, is it really important in your description to have "LLC", the type of corporation that you're structured as? I don't think so. And if you don't plan on writing for LLC ever at any time, you might as well chuck that and use the available limited keywords.

Remember, you don't have a lot in your description. Use something that's going to be relevant to wedding planning.

**Travis:** So this meta-description tag is often what shows up in Google, or the Google search results, correct?

**Jeremy:** Yes.

**Travis:** But it's also something that you need to keep in mind that will be used for what your site's about, so you've got to try to make some combination of readability and keywords in there?

**Jeremy:** Yeah, exactly. I think you nailed it right there. I think if you're being informative, you have a call to action - what do you want them to do? Do you want them to view the site? What's going on? And then have it be functional. And if you can do those three things, you've nailed it. The description needs to tell the people what you're about, what you want them to do, and allow them to do it.

**Travis:** OK.

**Jeremy:** There's also one more meta-description tag on the page, which is the keywords tag. Keywords tags have less and less weight, due to people stuffing key - I mean, up until even two or three years ago, people would put a couple hundred keywords on a home page or on any page. And it just doesn't help you. It hurts you. You need to make sure everything's relevant. If your competitors and the density of your cluster of like sites has 30 or more, that's going to be your average that you need to have. So know that you can't just triple what your competition has, what they have for their web pages, and then you'll rank.

But here, you'll notice that they have pretty odd keywords on some of these things, like "fabulous."

**Travis:** Right. Who's going to type in "fabulous"?

**Jeremy:** Coordinators. "Coordinators" is the keyword, and it's a good one, but they should probably have "wedding coordinators." They also have "event planners weddings planning" all in the same keyword. They also have in their keywords "LLC" again. And in addition, they have "Miami Beach" and "FL" not spelled out. All of those are the same things that apply to

relevancy. And then one of the other things I like to do it just look at how the page is structured. And really quickly, just to do this for M & E Weddings, they don't have any H-1s or H-2s or header tags or anything.

And that's an opportunity that they could use to use things like right on that home page should be "A fabulous and luxurious and stress-free wedding awaits you with M & E Weddings." You could make that an H-1. You could make an H-2 "stress-free wedding planning, "

So there's definitely a bunch of things that they could do to really, dramatically improve the structure of the site and make an investment in it. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

**Travis:** Fantastic. Good. Now Miami Wedding Planners, do you think that's a competitive market or not?

**Jeremy:** I'd like to say yes.

**Travis:** Probably. If they don't make these changes and do it the right way, probably never going to rank on the first page, right? That makes this website become, basically, an online brochure.

**Jeremy:** Exactly. So the next site I figure we'd do would be Out of Hand Festival.

**Travis:** [outofhandfestival.com](http://outofhandfestival.com). I like this website.

**Jeremy:** Big dreams, small screens. Yeah, I think this one's neat, too. They've actually got a cool, it's not my style, but it is a pretty neat design. It's very visual. And it's pretty easy to see what they do and how they work. Now, these guys have a page rank, which is good. It means that Google has actually ranked them based on their trust, their popularity, and how the community sees them.

So they've got a page rank of four, which lets me know they're not poor. They're not down in on the one or two. But they're also not there in the six, seven, eight, nine range, which is ideally where you want to be.

**Travis:** OK.

**Jeremy:** Very similar is we go through the same types of issues with these guys, but we look at the other sites. First, you want to look at the structure, meaning do they have a title? Do they have a description? And you can basically see, they actually have pretty good meta data up there. The meta description I see is a showcase for innovate digital content created by students and intended for playback on mobile phones and other wireless or handheld devices, etc, etc. So they've got 39 words, about 240 characters. So they've got ... that's a pretty good description.

The title I see is Out of Hand International Festival - Home. Seven words, 35 characters. Good length, short, has the page descriptor on it. And then they did get a little bit long winded with the meta keywords, though.

Let's see ... oh, what do they have here ... they've got almost 100 keywords. So there are 98 words and 700 characters almost, which as you know from pretty much any keyword list, it's a little heavy.

**Travis:** So do you think that's going to maybe raise some red flags for Google on the keyword stuffing?

**Jeremy:** It could, but if you look at them, they're all pretty good. So, like we were talking about earlier, there is no keyword stuffing, and most of these are relevant. Things like film competition, student film competition, then art competition, mobile art competition, handheld device competition, Out of Hand International Festival, Out of Hand Art Festival. So I could lean that up 30% and be a little bit happier with it, but right now I don't think it's killing them. Again, he does have a page rank of four, so this wouldn't be anything that grave, but a huge red flag with the other instructions.

**Travis:** OK.

**Jeremy:** So looking at some of the other factors that they've got going on. They're pretty good with their actual links. They've got 771.

**Travis:** Can we see that?

**Jeremy:** So if you actually go, pop it up in my browser. I actually go to search.yahoo.com.

**Travis:** All right, so one through ten of 715. Pretty nice.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, no, exactly. So they've got some pretty good indexed and linked to data. This just shows you that good and they're out there. They've got ...

**Travis:** I see some .edus here.

**Jeremy:** Electro Rank ... I'm sorry? Yeah, they have 13 .edu links. They've got .addto links, they've got 13. How many are you showing?

**Travis:** I don't even know how to measure that. But yeah, that's a lot more than any of my sites have.

**Jeremy:** It looks like they've got links from the schoolofvisualarts.edu, community.msaca.fda.edu, they've got a bunch of ... yeah, so they're doing well. And just for all the people who don't know, .edu links are fantastic, .gov links are fantastic. Due to the nonprofit nature of these entities, Google actually weights their links stronger than .coms. It really helps you out. So we specifically, as SEOs, try to get links to those actual, or from those actual .edu and .gov domains, because they're so solid and they've got such good link juice.

**Travis:** OK. So, Jeremy, it looks like these guys really know what they're doing. They must have either a professional SEO on their staff or somebody that really knows the ins and outs of SEO.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, obviously, they've got a lot of design elements and whatnot, and designers now are building more web pages because HTML is getting, I'd like to say, simpler. It's not getting more complicated. With good TNSes out there, designers are doing a lot more of the work. So, sites like this, they look like they're doing really well, and they have what looks like a Flash component in there. All this is in an HTML wrapper. So, they either have really good in-house developers and designers, or they're working with an SEO or have had advice from a good SEO.

**Travis:** So, can you find anything that you would do differently on this?

**Jeremy:** Oh, on the site? Yeah, I mean, again, I would definitely change some of the metadata. In addition, I would basically, the way that the entries and the data, for me, I would bring more out less clicks deep. For me, the home page is a little ... is very designer friendly, and oh, what's the right word ... usable. But there are a lot of opportunities here for a lot of links and a lot of linking opportunities. If you see, they have SVA, School of Visual Arts, and enter all these links in the bottom, but there's probably opportunity to do more of that and really to get a lot of that content up and be bold.

**Travis:** One of the things that I see that they do a lot in here is that this is looks like a, some kind of a dynamic PHP script that runs all of their pages, or nearly all of their pages at least. So the bottom of the terms of use, the currency policy, the site map, those are all on Clearstream pages that all go to index.php? You think that they might be better served by actually having physical HTML pages on here instead of query strings for all of them?

**Jeremy:** Oh, yeah, I didn't even get into analyzing actually URL structure. That's a whole train wreck. Sorry to not bring it up, I was just looking at the on page stuff. But there's very light content on the home page. That's what I was saying, bring stuff forward. There are a lot of images, but if you look, there's really not a lot of content on the home page. I think you're right with what you said, even with a PHP script, it's really not well, like ... When you click on the home page at index.php, I get option equals com on this one page. I get a bunch of modifiers. I don't know what CMS is running it, it's definitely not a clean one like WordPress or Drupal or anything like that.

It's probably a cheaper script, like you were mentioning. So, it's a great point. It just goes hand in hand, you have to work with a great platform, or else you'll be correcting things every day.

**Travis:** OK. So, but, do you think this kind of a URL structure throughout the site is going to hurt their SEO, or do you think that, these days with the advancement of search engine spiders, that it's not really going to make that much difference as far as the rankings go?

**Jeremy:** No, it's very important. Remember, anything after your actual page, anything that has a question mark or an ampersand, anything that could be misconstrued... The question marks and the ampersands, those, I'm really not concerned as much about. It's the actual folder structures. So anything after the .com, .net, the .org, or the .edu.

**Travis:** OK. [audio ends]

<http://www.SmallBusinessVictory.com>

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