

TRUST FLOW & CITATION FLOW EXPLAINED: POD'S GUIDE TO BACKLINK METRICS.

This is a guide we created for our clients, but there's so little easy-to-digest info out there on **Trust** and **Citation Flow** that we thought we'd share it with you too.



As a part of our digital service offering here at Pod, we like to help our clients keep track of how well their digital marketing and PR is performing. One way in which we do this is by providing a data and analytics platform, including metrics for Trust Flow and Citation Flow.

These are two related metrics which have been created by search engine results page (SERP) analysis provider **Majestic**. Trust Flow and Citation Flow are extremely useful for helping you (and us) understand the flow of traffic to your website and where it comes from. But like any metric, how useful these measurements will be is highly dependent on us all understanding what they really mean.

Now, there's a massive amount of information online about these metrics - and the respective URLs, backlinks and algorithms. A lot of it won't make sense to people who don't have 'digital' in their job title. We're going to try to explain things in a way that everyone can understand.

Here goes...

TRUST FLOW

Trust flow is a number between 0 and 100 predicting how **trustworthy** a web-page is.

The number is based on how many other trustworthy websites link to that page (these are the backlinks we mentioned above).

A 'good' Trust Flow number can vary dramatically but the best way to gauge how well your website is doing is to compare it to your closest competitors.

That's why we will monitor up to 10 of those competitors for our clients.

CITATION FLOW

Citation flow is a number between 0 and 100 predicting how **influential** a web page is.

The number is based on how many other websites (trustworthy or not) link to that page.

WHY ARE THESE METRICS IMPORTANT?

Trust and Citation Flow can have a huge impact on your website's performance in search engine results. Google places a lot of importance on metrics like these - and to really give your search engine optimisation (SEO) a boost you need both, with a good ratio of Trust Flow to Citation Flow.

You see, **Citation Flow** only cares about the *popularity* of your backlink. Quite simply, the more links that point to a webpage, the more influential it is considered to be. It doesn't consider the quality of the websites holding those links.

Trust Flow, on the other hand, focuses on the *quality* of your backlinks. You'll score much higher if your backlinks come from The Guardian or FT for example, than if they come from welovefakegossip.com.

THE TRUST/ CITATION RATIO

A high Trust Flow score will also organically bump up your Citation Flow score and give you an overall trust ratio that is a sure sign to Google that your webpage is **relevant and trustworthy** - so you'll get pushed up the search rankings. For example, you might have a Trust Flow score of 70 (above 50 is a great score) and a Citation Flow score of 40. We would consider this good news because it means your online marketing and PR is doing a great job. However, a high Citation Flow score without a good Trust Flow score could actually push you down the rankings. This is a sign to Google that your URL can be found on lots of low quality, low trust websites.

Still following? Now for the important bit...

INFLUENCING YOUR TRUST AND CITATION FLOW METRICS

The best way to boost your Trust Flow is to make sure you produce high quality, relevant and interesting content. This then needs to feature - along with your URL - on a trusted website, or be linked to from there. A good example might be a piece

of editorial featured on a respected trade title's website and linking back to the relevant page on your company site.

Not sure who to trust? The websites you want to feature on have lots of traffic and a low bounce rate. They are probably regularly referenced by the national/international broadsheets' sites and would be hosting a limited number of backlinks. The trust 'flows' from them to you - and Google loves you for it. It's important to mention that the trust flows internally too - so having a good strong Home page for your own business will also help you boost the Trust Flow of any pages that it links to.

Majestic has produced its own blog on this topic. It has complicated graphs and rock-pool metaphors. We think ours is easier to understand but if you want to do a little more digging, you'll find theirs at blog.majestic.com

Alternatively, drop our digital guru Adam a line. We're sure he'll be happy to help.

The highest scoring sites for Trust Flow are known as 'seed sites'. Majestic has compiled a secret list of these sites and the closer your webpage's backlinks put you to these sites, the higher your score will be. Eg. If you have a backlink on wired.co.uk and they in turn have a link on a potential seed site like FT, the trust flows from FT, through Wired and on to you. It's a little more complicated than that in reality - and it's done with fancy algorithms - but the below diagram should help make it easier to understand.



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