



Internet Marketing Consultants

This is one of the 'Best of' articles written by Barry Welford. The current portfolio of these articles is to be found at <http://smmbc.ca/portfolio/>

Top 100 Lists Are Over The Top

The original article can be found at <http://www.dirjournal.com/articles/top-100-lists-are-over-the-top/>

*He's making a list
And checking it twice;
Gonna find out
Who's naughty and nice*

[Santa Claus has come and gone](#). However that list making he gets involved in seems to be infectious. Making a list seems to be the rule rather than the exception as we move from 2008 into 2009.

As people look to the future and remember the past, they so often end up preparing a list. That can either be of things past that they remember with affection or awe, or it may be of the future with things that will delight them.

Some of them are really quite long. For example here is a bunch of **Top 100 websites** found in a Google search.

- [Guardian UK – 100 top sites for the year ahead](#)
- [Top 100 downloads of free software & freeware for Windows XP & Vista](#)
- [Top 100 Franchises](#)
- [Healthcare 100](#) – Ranking the world's top blogs and bloggers in health and medicine
- [100 Top Wine Blogs](#)
- [100 Desi Topsites](#) – Ranking Best Indian Pakistani Websites
- [Top 100 Products of 2008](#) from ReadWriteWeb
- [Top 100 Influential Online Marketers List](#)

They are not even the longest lists you find. One of the most impressive that has just appeared is

- [Best Internet Marketing Posts of 2008](#) prepared by Tamar Weinberg.

That has almost 300 items and there are some very fine marketing posts included. Given that one of my websites is included in Tamar's list, it may appear churlish of me to question why so many of these long lists are produced. Each requires a great deal of skill

and effort to put together and that alone deserves recognition. Nevertheless it is always worth questioning why things are done in a particular way, because occasionally the answer suggests an improvement.

In this case I assume that people produce these lists for the same reason that they climb Mount Everest. It is a personal challenge and the view from the top is impressive. The sense of achievement of such a long list producer must be immense. Of course with modern software assembling a list of 100 URL references can be almost a piece of cake. Nevertheless the author with a sense of pride will rigorously evaluate the collection to select only the sheep and avoid the goats.

So we can relate to the sense of satisfaction of the Top 100 list creator. If others find the list intriguing, they may even comment on the list and thus the creator gets useful back links. That is all good for the list creators. What is in it for the rest of us? Even if your blog post or website is included in the list, will anyone ever bother to view it. There are only so many hours in the day and we all have too little time to do all the things we should be doing.

Perhaps the long lists are more like those society columns where someone knowledgeable on the social scene and well connected writes a column listing all the notable people who attended. Merely appearing on the list brings its own reward and bragging rights. You get a sense that this is important from the comments that often appear attached to such long lists. Some are from those appearing on the lists who are thanking the author for naming them. Others are from others who thought they should have been on the list and for some inexplicable reason were not included.

This discussion should not be seen as denigrating the entries on such lists. The quality of the list depends critically on who put the list together. To be included, the author needs to be visible to the list creator and must have created a post or web page that compares well with other candidate items for the list. However in a list of 100 items, the only person who is likely to make a fuss about whether their post is in or out is the author of the individual post.

The list takes on a much more incisive nature if the items appear in some order of merit. Being third on a ranked list clearly confers much greater bragging rights than being 93rd. However doing an effective ranking of 100 items takes much more effort than assembling the 100 items in the first place. Most such rankings will depend on some simple combination of factors, some of which are sometimes very arguable. In such a situation it is hardly worth the effort of debating whether one's ranking should have been higher.

Thankfully the usefulness of these long lists erodes rapidly, just like those society columns. The world moves on and we all live to fight another day.

The sole exception to this erosion is the long-term visibility of such lists in the search engine databases. Years later you can still check, if you wish, that your website appeared in some Top 100 listing in 2004. Such is fame. Of course Google cares about those links so all may not be

lost. The weight to be attached to any link that appears on a page with 100 others is clearly miniscule. However if you appear on enough Top 100 lists, who knows how valuable that may be?

The bottom line on all this is probably to treat these Top 100 listings exactly like those society columns. Here today and gone tomorrow. It is much better to put your efforts into something that deserves a whole blog post to itself. ... even if that is your only 15 minutes of fame.