OptiLink User's Guide

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Introduction

The main issue that concerns Internet marketers is the search engine ranking of a page. If a page is returned within the top 10 sites by a search engine for a particular nitch, more people will click on that page than on a page ranked number 30. As any Internet marketer knows getting top ranking with the search engines doesn't just happen.

In the "old days" word counting was enough. Web page marketers waged a constant battle to get the right keyword density while search engines tried to trap a hundred different "keyword stuffing" schemes. Then the search engines added a new wrinkle: "link popularity." The more links to a site, the easier it was to get top ranking, so of course, internet marketers put up huge "link farms". Search engines had to do something or the indexes would be choked with millions of meaningless links. The solution was "Link Analysis." Now instead of just counting the links, the search engines really want know what you're about. Keyword counting (still important) defines your "Topic" -- what *you* say you're about. Link analysis defines your "Reputation" -- what others say you're about.

OptiLink is a specialized browser that allows you query search engine results and to analyze a web page's link structure and reputation– the links it has to other pages, and the links other pages have to it. This is not guesswork– this is what the search engines actually say about a site.

Whether you are researching your own site or one of your competitors, OptiLink brings together, all in one place, the very same information that the search engines use in analyzing your site. In a series of specialized views the linking structure of any page you desire is taken apart and presented in a way that exposes inconsistencies and opportunities for improvement.

There might be a hundred ways you can use that information to increase your traffic and improve your business, but here are just a few:

- Look at your own pages and your own sites and be consistent in how they link to each other;

- Add and modify keywords on your pages to make the best use of the links you are getting;

- Discover and quantify undesirable links and seek to have them removed or changed;

- Identify the Hubs and Authorities in your subject area so you can ask for links where it really counts;

- Show you where to narrow the focus of each of your pages for more effective linking; or

- Reverse engineer the linking structures and strategies that successful marketers are using.

- View reports others have generated.

OptiLink will cause you to see your pages in a new way and to think about optimization and traffic building in different terms. Just as you **re-think**, you will probably **re-link**.

System Requirements

Your Computer

CPU   266 MHZ or faster recommended
Memory   64 Mb RAM minimum
Freespace   70 Mb minimum prior to install
Operating System   Windows 98 or later
                            Linux, any version
                            Macintosh with Windows emulator

Firewalls

These are a common problem with programs, such as OptiLink, that access the internet. Refer to your firewall vendor documentation for instructions.

Proxy Support

OptiLink 2.0 supports internet access via a proxy. See the description of the Setup menu in the Reference section for setup instructions

How To Use This Manual

OptiLink may be used in two different ways. If you purchased OptiLink, you will be able to analyze web pages for both keyword and linking strategy, and you will be able to share the reports you generate with other people who also have OptiLink.

In order to allow other people to view OptiLink reports, OptiLink is also distributed as a free viewer. OptiLink may be downloaded for free, and it may be distributed freely by users.

If you have purchased OptiLink, you will receive an e-mail with your authorization code. Entering this authorization code in the Setup menu will enable the base features of OptiLink and any optional features that you have purchased. If you did not purchase OptiLink, you will not receive an authorization code, but you may still use the program as a "viewer" to look at reports generated by other people.

Installing OptiLink

Step 1: Download the OptiLinkInstaller.exe to your local system.
Go to www.optitext.com/optilink/download.html. If you are running Windows, click the link for OptiLink 2.0 Installer For Windows.   After downloading the installer, double click on installer.exe to install OptiLink.

If you are running Unix or Linux, you will have to do two installations. you must first install the Sun Java Runtime Environment (JRE) Version 1.4.1 and then execute the OptiLink installer.
Click on the link Java JRE 1.4.1 Download to download the Java Runtime Environment.
Click on the link OptiLink 2.0 Pure Java Installer for Linux Users to download the installer for OptiLink. To execute the OptiLink installer, open a Linux command window and execute the command: `java -jar install.jar`

Step 2: After you have executed install.exe or install.jar, you will see this window: Click *Next*.


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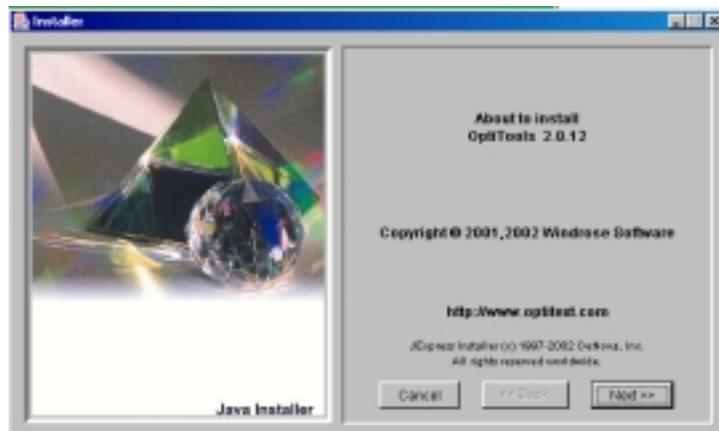
Step 3: After reading the license agreement, click *I Agree* to proceed with the installation.
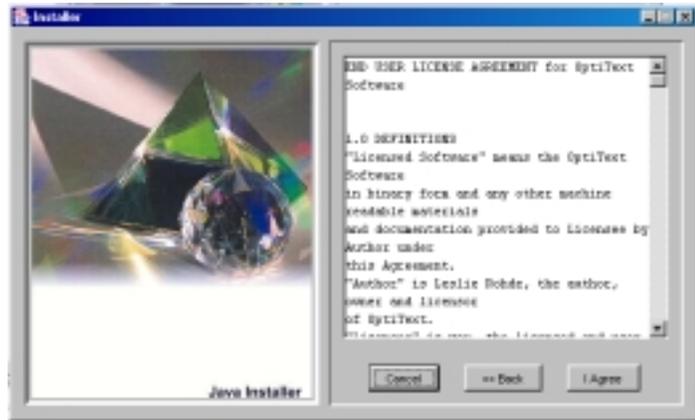
Step 4: After reading the information on the Welcome Screen, click *Next*.
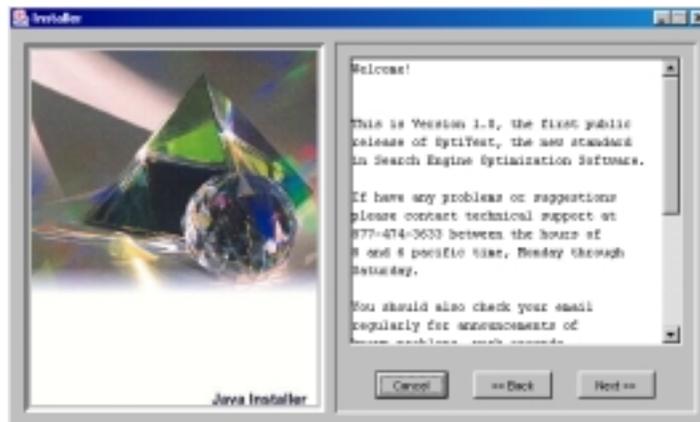
Step 5: Choose where you want OptiLink to be installed and click *Install*.
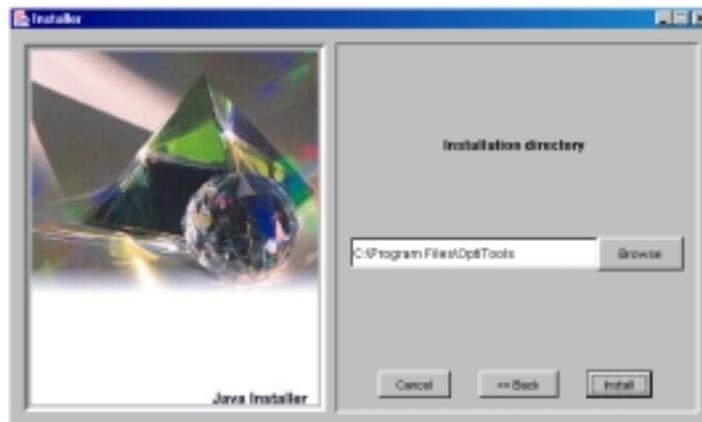
Step 6: When the installation is complete the following screen will appear:
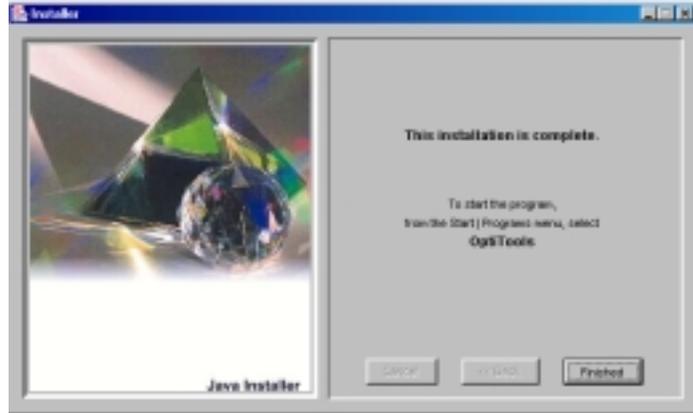
Step 7: If a proxy server is used, set this up now. On the File menu, click Setup.
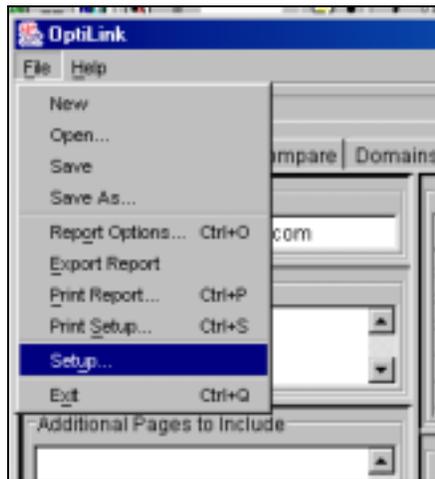
When the Setup window appears, fill in your proxy server information. This information is available from your systems administrator.

If you have purchased OptiLink, fill in your authorization key sent to you in the "welcome" email when you purchased the software.
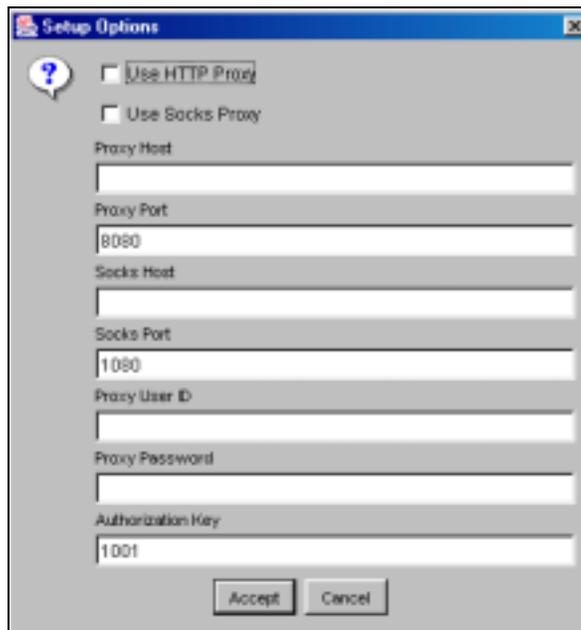
Tutorial

This first section of the tutorial gives you a quick overview of OptiLink. You should also view the 5 Minute Tour which may be seen online by opening the OptiLink program and clicking on Help/Online Tour. This tutorial does not explain every option in OptiLink because the purpose is just to get you started. A full description of options, buttons, and views are explained in the section entitled Reference.

Step 1: If you have a dial up connection, connection to the Internet now. If you have a direct connection, you do not need to do anything.

Step 2: Open the OptiLink program by clicking on the Start Menu, then clicking on OptiLink.

Step 3: The first time OptiLink is executed after installation it will come up as a viewer with the Start button disabled. If you have purchased OptiLink, the welcome email will contain the authorization key and instructions.
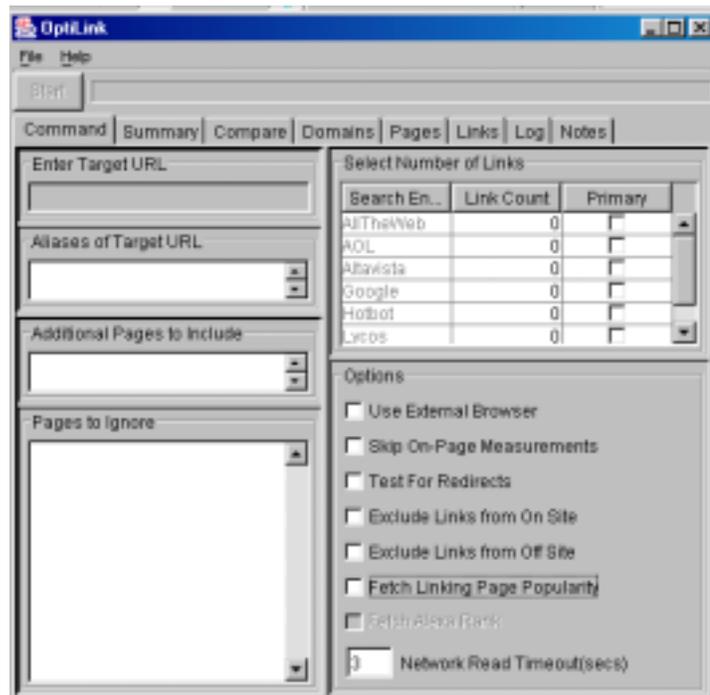
Step 4: Setup OptiLink with proxy settings and the authorization key. Click Setup on the File menu. The Setup window will appear.
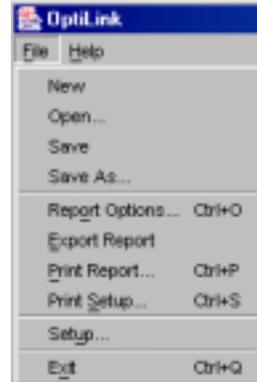
If you use a proxy server, enter the proxy server settings here. The browser you are currently using is a good source for how to set these correctly, or ask your system administrator for assistance.

Authorization Key: This is a string that was sent to you if you purchased OptiLink. This key enables the base features and any optional you purchased Without an authorization key, the OptiLink software defaults to being a viewer – the Start button is disabled. You can do File Open to view results someone else created, but you don't have the ability to create new analyses. It can only view an existing analysis built by others

After entering the authorization key, hit "accept", quit the software, and reopen it. The only time OptiLink looks at the authorization key is when the software starts.

Step 5: Set Report Options by clicking on the File Menu and then on Report Options. When the Report Options window is displayed, make sure all options are checked.
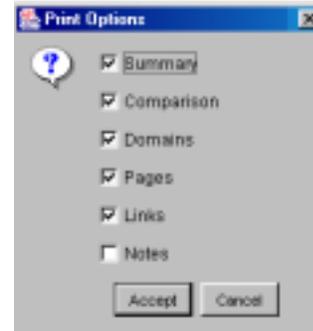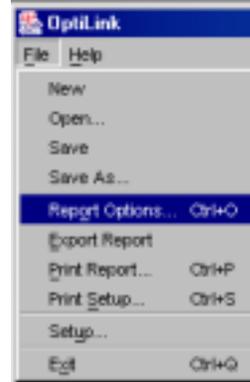
Step 6: When you return to the Command View, you will see the Start button enabled as well as the search engines. If you ordered the basic package, only 4 search engines (AOL, Altavista, Google, and Hotbot) will be enabled.
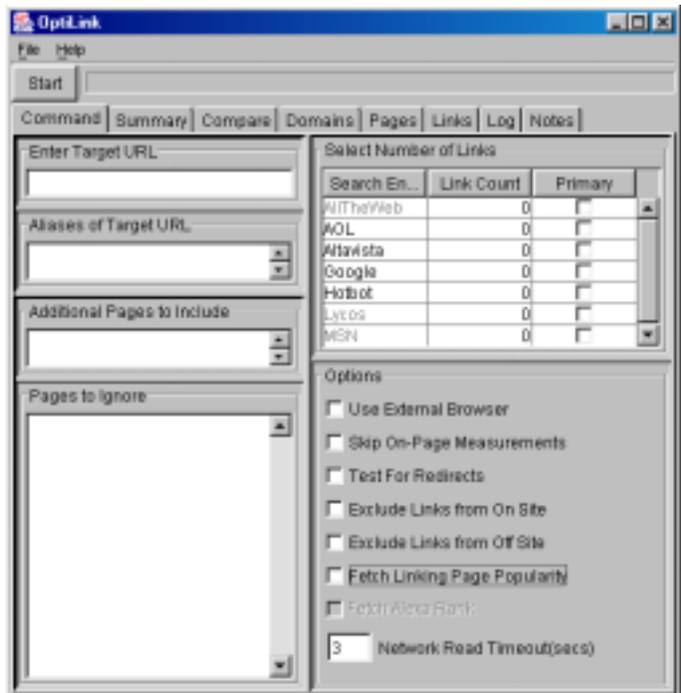
If you purchased the Search Engine Extension Pack, then all the remaining search engines (AllTheWeb, Lycos and MSN) will be enabled as well as Fetch Alexa Rank.
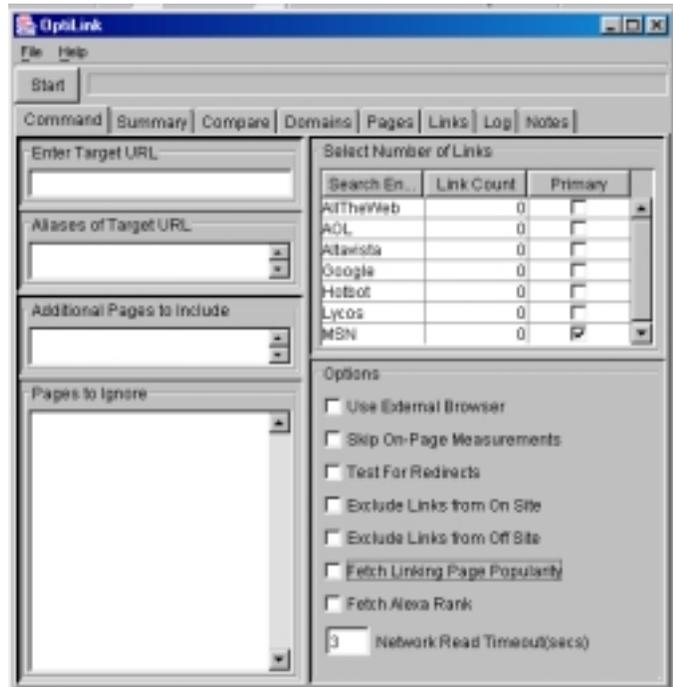
Step 7: On the Command View (click the command tab) You will set criteria for the analysis you want to perform as shown in the following window:
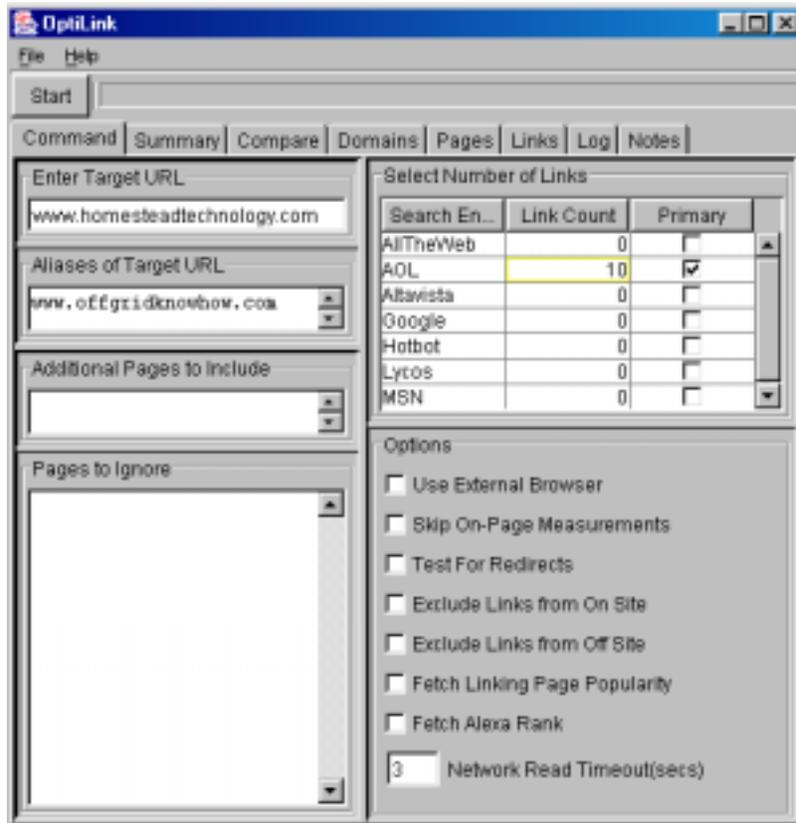
Enter Target URL	Enter the url of the target page you wish to analyze. For this tutorial set this to www.homesteadtechnology.com
Target URL Aliases	Enter any urls that resolve to the same page as the target page. Set this to www.offgridknowhow.com
Additional Pages to Include	Enter urls of pages that link to your target page, but which the search engines do not yet know about because they have not yet been spidered. Leave this blank.
Pages to Ignore	Enter urls of pages that link to your target page, but which you wish to ignore – possibly because you are considering deleting them from your site. Leave this blank.

Engine Search Counts For each search engine you wish to analyze, enter a link count greater than 0. click in the Link Count cell next to the search engine you want to analyze. A drop down menu will appear. Highlight the number of links you want

The number of links controls the level of "precision" you get in your measurements. For a "quickie" check of what a page is about and what kind of sites link to it, 10 or 20 sites will do. 100 links will give you a picture of the page that is much closer to what the search engine actually uses in responding to user searches.

Set AOL to a count of 10

**Primary** OptiLink queries the primary search engine to determine the popularity (on-page word counting rules used) of the pages that link to the target page. This value is shown in the Pages view. A complete description of this calculation is provided in the Resource section.

Since only one search engine, AOL, is selected, it will be designated as primary by default.

Options – For this tutorial leave all options blank

Use External Browser	This brings up a browser with the results of the search engine query that you specified – i.e. a list of pages that link to your target page..
Skip On-page Measurements	On Page Measurements are the keyword density analysis of the target url . This is in the Compare View in the column labeled Page, and is the percentage occurrence of the given word. Generally this would be used if there is a problem with the target page that causes OptiLink to have some problem processing it.
Test For Redirects	This is primarily used for tracking affiliate linking, so leave it blank for now. A full description of the use of this option is in the Resource section.
Exclude Links From Onsite	Ignore links from the same domain as the target page.
Exclude Links From Offsite	Ignore links from outside the target page domain.
Fetch Linking Page Popularity	The popularity of the pages that link to your page. Leave it blank for now. A full description of the use of this option is in the Resource section.
Fetch Alexa Rank	The traffic ranking returned by Alexa.com. This is an option included in the Search Engine Extension Pack. Leave it blank for now. A full description of the use of this option is in the Resource section.
Network Read Timeout (secs)	This is the time allowed for search engine response. Leave this with the default of 3 seconds.

Step 8: Press the start button. The user
interface will switch to the "Log"
window and you will start seeing
web results almost immediately.
As OptiLink processes your
command it displays progress and
error messages in the Log view.
Any network or data errors will be
listed here.
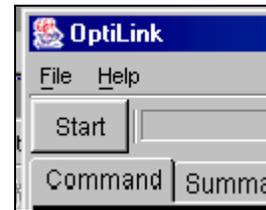
Step 9: Once OptiLink finishes processing your command, it displays the Summary view,
the first of six result views that show different aspects of link reputation for your
target page. Here you'll see your target page listed along with its IP address, the
number of inbound links to the page reported by the search engine and a few other
important particulars. A detailed description of the Summary view along with the
other 5 views may be found in the Resource section.

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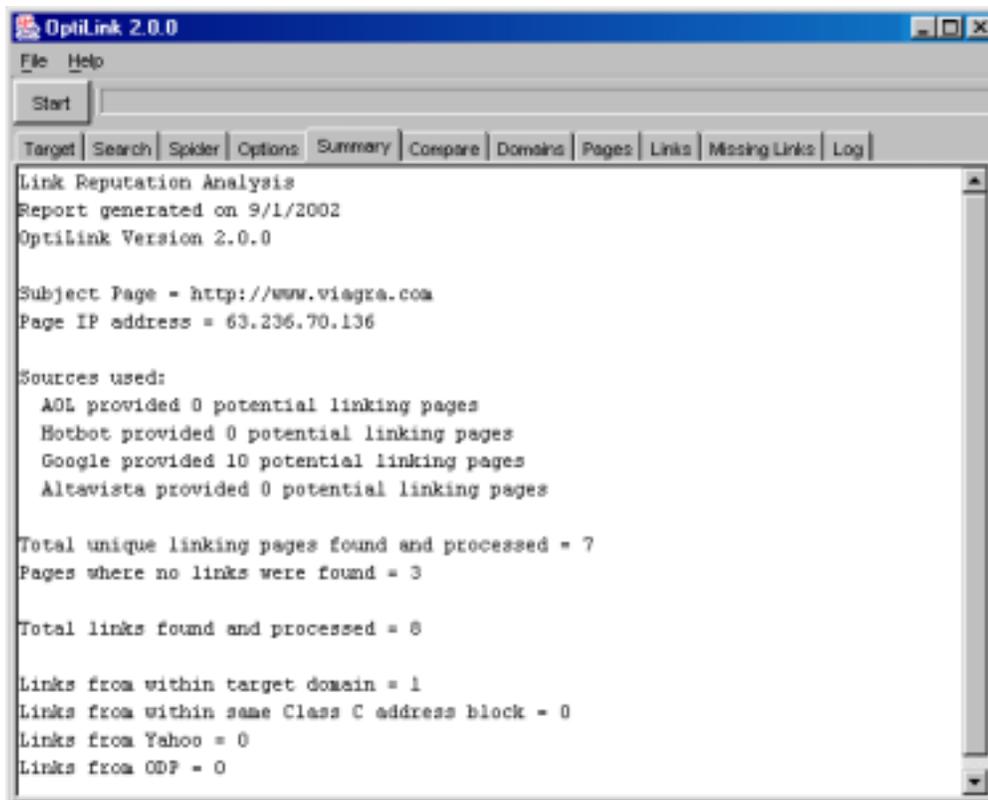
Using OptiLink As A Viewer

OptiLink software defaults to being a viewer – the Start button is disabled. You can do File Open to view results someone else created, but you don't have the ability to create new analyses.

You can download the OptiLink View for free, and it is freely distributable.
All the user interface of OptiLink is enabled, and the only thing it can't do is run new analyses. The use would be in a collaborative environment. For instance, you might be doing search engine optimization, and you want to give instructions to the web designer about changing links. You can do that by adding text in the Notes view, which is writable in the viewer version. Then you could send the report to someone with a viewer who is responsible for updating the links on the page. Professional SEO's can use the viewer version of OptiLink with clients. They run an analysis, then send the free viewer to the client, or have the client download it, and then send them the analysis file so that the client can see before and after shots of the site along with an explanation, in the notes section, of what was done and what the SEO expects to happen.

Reference

This section provides a feature-by-feature description of OptiLink.

Main Window
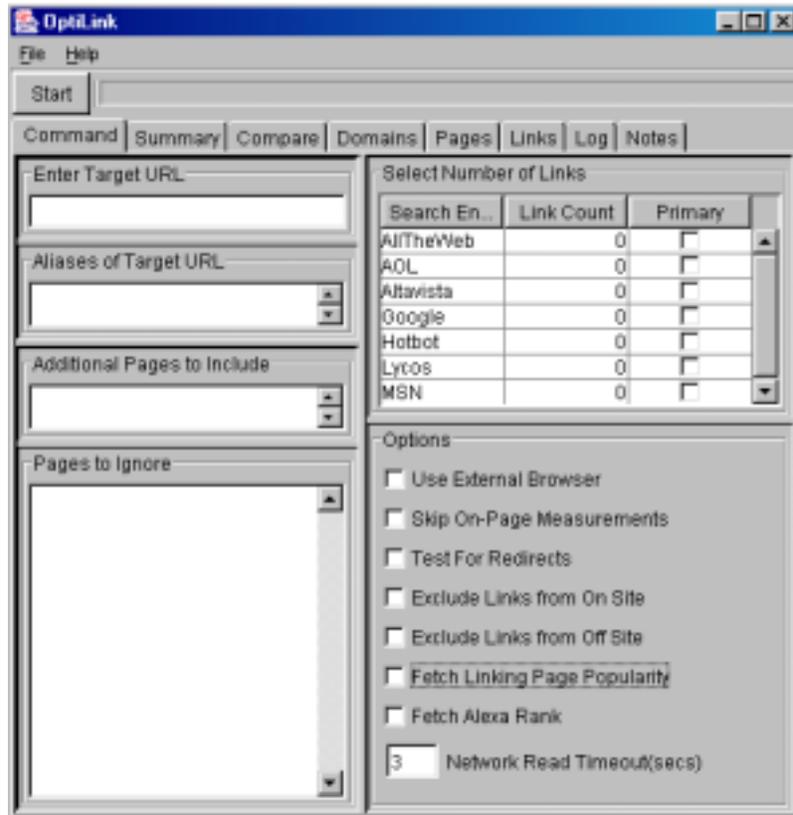
The main window of OptiLink contains the File and Help menus, and 8 tabs. When a tab is selected is reveals a "view". The Command View allows the user to enter information to define the analysis he wants to do. Five of the remaining tabs, Summary, Compare, Domain, Pages, and Links provide different views of the data that has been gathered by OptiLink about the target site. The Log View records the various actions OptiLink takes. The Notes View provides a place for the user to enter notes. Each of the views is described in the following sections.

Menus

File Menu

New
Begins a new report.

Open
Reads in a previously created OptiLink analysis.

Save and Save As
Saves an OptiLink analysis to a file.

Report Options
Brings up a window that lists the report views. Click the view or views you wish to include in printouts and exports.
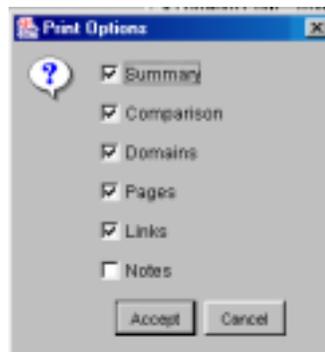
Export Report

Export Report creates an html file that contains the views that are checked in the Report Options Window and opens it in the system browser. From this window, you can either save the full report to a file or print it.

Print Report

OptiLink prints a report that contains each of the views that is checked in the Report Options Window.   .

Print Setup

This brings up a standard printer setup dialog.

Setup

Clicking on Setup in the File Menu brings up the Setup Window which allows the user to define parameters for a proxy server as well as enter your authorization key. Whatever browser you are currently using is a good source for how to set these correctly, or your system administrator.
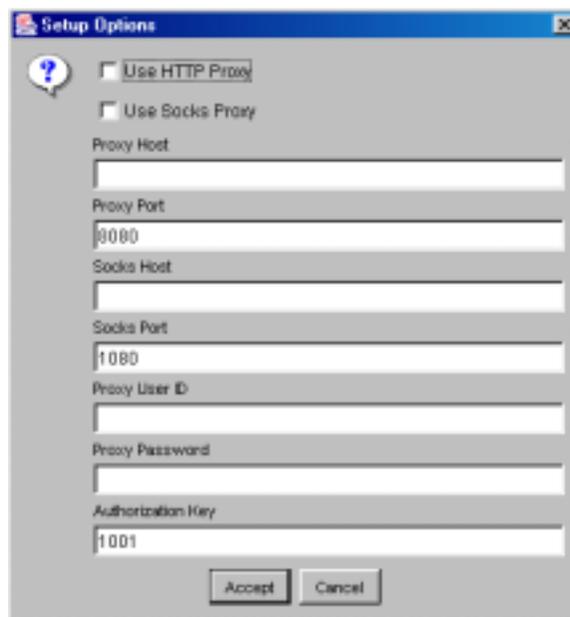
> **Authorization Key**: This is a value that was sent to you if you purchased OptiLink. This key enables the base features and optional features in the program. If this field is blank, you are operating the OptiLink Viewer which is free software that you can distribute as you like, but it cannot perform an analysis. It can only view an existing analysis built by others. You can do File Open to view results someone else created, but you don't have the ability to create new analyses. If there is an authorization key, then you have purchased a copy of OptiLink and possibly one or more optional plug-ins.

As soon as OptiLink is installed, it will come up as an unauthorized viewer with the Start button disabled. If you have purchased OptiLink, the welcome method will contain the authorization key and instructions. To do file setup enter the authorization key, hit "accept", quit the software, and reopen it. The only time OptiLink looks at the authorization key is when the software starts. The authorization key will contain information about what options you have purchased. You have the base program, the base program plus some additional search engines, the spider, or any combination. If you want to purchase additional options in the future, you can do that on line and you are immediately enabled for the options you have purchased.

Help Menu

Online Tour--Take a 5-minute tour of OptiLink features.

Online FAQ--This page provides answers to some of the most common questions and solutions to the most common problems for the OptiLink product.

Reference--A link to OptiLink reference material.

Tabs

Clicking on a tab brings up a "view". A view is selected by clicking on the tab, which brings the selected view in front of the others. The following chart gives a brief description of each of the views. Each view is described in detail in following sections.

Command	This is where you define the target page you want to analyze.
Summary	Once an analysis is completed, OptiLink automatically selects this view to the front. It provides a brief outline of the results found.
Compare	This view compares the Topic of the selected Web page with the Reputation of the page. The Topic is measured by what words, and combinations of words, occur most frequently on the page. The Reputation of a page however is a measure of what other pages say the subject page is about. Reputation is measured by the number of incoming links that use various words and combinations of words. The "best" pages in any given category are likely to be those that have Topic and Reputation measures that are in close agreement.
Domains	It is well known that some search engines consider close adjacency in IP address in assessing the relevancy and authority of incoming links.

In the table on the Domains View you will see all the domains that contributed links to your subject page and the IP address of each. A large number of domains clustered in the same Class C block, are likely to be partially or completely discounted by the more advanced search engines.

Pages

The table on this view provides a view of the pages that link to your subject page in terms of Hubs and Authorities. An authority page can thought of as a very popular--authoritative--destination, with many inbound links and relatively view links to other pages. What links there are of course, would be very important. A Hub page is just opposite--it is more like a train station with numerous outgoing links. Hubs may have many incoming links as well if they are "very well known" hubs. Use the Pages View to decide which page links are more important than others, and why.

Links

The precise text used to link to your page will often not be the best it could be. The Links View is where you go to look at each of these links and potentially request that the linking site modify their link to you. Alternatively, it might be a source of inspiration or "customer" feedback about what others think your page is really about. Maybe they're right? It could be that you should change or enhance your page measures to move your Topic closer to your Reputation.

Log

While the OptiLink link analysis engine is running, the log view provides a blow-by-blow monolog of progress. This can also be reviewed after the fact for error conditions should the results displayed in the other views appear incorrect.

Notes

This view is an edit window even for a "view only" version of OptiLink. The viewer may make whatever notes he wants here and then send the OptiLink report, along with his notes, to the next viewer.

Table Operations

Each of the views that presents data (Summary, Compare, Domains, Pages, and Links) present that data in the form of tables. Each of the tables can be manipulated to reorder and sort the columns to provide the most helpful format for the data.

Sort Ascending	Right click in the column name cell to sort alphabetically if the column contains strings. If the column is numeric, this will sort in descending numerical value.
Sort Descending	Shift/Right click in the column name cell will sort in reverse alphabetical order. If the column is numeric it will sort in ascending numeric value.
Resize Column	Move the curser over the dividing line between two columns. When the right/left arrow appears, depress the right mouse button, and move the edge of the column to the desired width.

Reorder Columns	Depress the right mouse button in the column name cell and drab the column to the position you wish.

Command View

The Command View is where you set up the criteria for the analysis you wish to run.
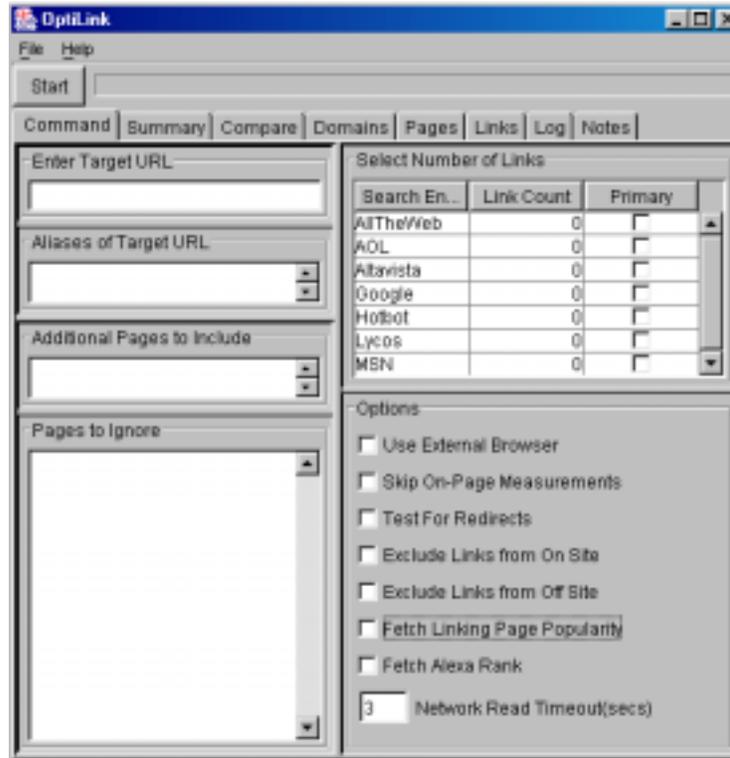
Enter Target URL

This is the URL of the page you wish to analyze. The reports that are generated will contain information on links from and to this page.

OptiLink takes the url you provide, such as www.nothing.com and prefaces it with "link:http//" and uses that as the search string for the url you selected. When a search engine sees this it returns a list of urls that link to your site. Some engines will also be given additional parameters to make the output results more appropriate to OptiLink's use. When "Show Query Results" is selected, the precise query OptiLink issued will be shown in the location field of your default browser.

Aliases of Target Page

This is where you enter other link text that could be used for the target page. For example when you enter *www.splat.com* as the target page name, that is really the host name and not a page name. A page name is implied. What happens is that when the web server sees an incomplete path – the host name and a directory for that web domain—it will provide the top level page which might be index.html, default.htm, home.htm, default.asp, etc. It could be any number of different names. The web server configuration determines what that is. There is no way for OptiLink to know.

So the Target Page Alias list can be used to define to OptiLink explicit names of pages that are linking to the site. This is also useful when the same set of pages is known by more than one name. For instance, you could have multiple domains directed to the same set of pages. If you have registered two domains and pointed them at the same set of pages, the search engines will figure that out, and you will find that your link popularity is the sum of those two sets of links. It could be that you have changed your domain name and you have your old domain name pointing at the new domain name through a redirection service. OptiLink will search for your target page, but anytime it finds a link that matches either the target or an alias, it will use that link.

Additional Pages To Include

In the additional pages to include field, you list pages that you would like to have considered in results just as though they were found in the search engine. The pages you might put there would be ones that you have reason to believe link to your target page, but have not yet been listed in the search engine. . These are pages you have already put out on your site – they are not files on your local hard drive. They must accessible on the web. There is a variety of reasons why you might want to lists pages here. One thing is that you could have zero link counts for all search engines – you are not asking the engines for links at all – and list a bunch of pages in the Additional Pages To Include. You are telling OptiLink, "I'm going to give you the list of pages to look at." One of the reasons you would want to do that is to police your reciprocal link agreements, where you have made an agreement with some other web site for a link. You could just have a saved OptiLink report with a list of those pages on which you are expecting to have links. You would rerun this occasionally to make sure those links are still there and still say what they are supposed to. Another way to use this is as you are developing new linking structures that have not yet been spidered. Suppose you have an existing site, and you add some more pages to the site, or you add some pages to another site, or you build a new site that links to your target page. Those new pages are not in the search engine, so you can't tell what your reputation is going to be once those are spidered without waiting six weeks. By listing pages in the Additional Pages field is to do "what if" analysis. You are trying to optimize the linking for the target url, you have made some new pages, and you want to see what your reputation is going to be once those pages are spidered by the engines.

Pages to Ignore

will not analyze pages that are listed here. There are a couple of reasons for eliminating pages from consideration. One is there may be a problem parsing a page. This can occur because there is a lot of bad html on the web. If there is an error on the page that causes OptiLink to have trouble loading that page, that page can be ignored by listing it here. Or you may be doing a "what if" analysis where you want to get rid of the link on this page, so you want to ignore the analysis for that page.

Select Number of Links

Selecting a search engine: For each search engine you wish to analyze, enter a link count greater than 0. Click in the Link Count cell next to the search engine you want to analyze. A drop down

menu will appear. Highlight the number of links you want

Link Count: The number of links controls the level of "precision" you get in your measurements. For a "quickie" check of what a page is about and what kind of sites link to it, 10 or 20 sites will do. 100 links will give you a picture of the page that is much closer to what the search engine actually uses in responding to user searches.

Primary Check Box: OptiLink uses search engines for two different things. First, it can use the search engines to obtain a list of pages that link to the url being analyzed. Second, OptiLink uses the search engine for is to get the popularity of the linking pages it finds. Suppose the target page and is linked to by pages A, B, and C. The engine checked as the primary engine is the one that is queried for the popularity of pages A, B, and C. This information will indicate how important those links are.

The Pages View shows a list of linking pages. The "Links In" in the Pages View are the links found by querying the engine checked as "primary".

Options

Show Query Results

This brings up a browser with the results of the search engine query that you specified – i.e. a list of pages that link to your target page..

Skip On-page Measurements

On Page Measurements are the keyword density analysis of the target url . This is in the Compare View in the column labeled Page, and is the percentage occurrence of the given word. Generally this would be used if there is a problem with the target page that causes OptiLink to have some problem processing it.

Test For Redirects

There are 2 ways to detect links. In normal operation, OptiLink compares the href text to the target url. When the page is referred to by an alias or a redirection, this doesn't work. When Follow Links is checked, OptiLink does much the same thing that the search engines do. It loads the target page which requires a domain name and server lookup, and then it checks to see if the page is the one it is interested in. This is very slow. However, for links which are redirections, which is oftentimes the case with big affiliate programs

For example, a site like 123inkjets will have many links into it, but few of them will actually contain the text "123inkjets. Most of the links to those pages will be through an affiliate management program such as Commission Junction. When an affiliate links to 123inkjets, there isn't really any link that says 123inkjets on their page. Instead, the link will say something like qjsrv.cgi/ and some numbers separated by a hyphen, which is how Commission Junction tracks the link from the affiliate page to the inkjet cartridge manufacturer. If the search engine says that there are 500 pages linking to 123inkjet.com, and you ask to analyze all 500 of them, OptiLink will do the browser equivalent of clicking on every link on every one of those pages and seeing if the effective url is 123inkjets. That is the way the search engines to it. However, they have many large computers doing it. Unless you want to have the same amount of compute power, or take a similar amount of time, you probably want to skip this except in the few cases where you really need it. In practice, Follow All Links is very rarely needed unless you want to know exactly what the link text says. Even when OptiLink doesn't find a link, the Pages view will show all the information except it will show 0 links to target. It won't show the link text because it doesn't know which of the links are actually a link to the target page, but at least you will know that the search engine claims this page links to your target page, and that may be as much information as you need

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Exclude Links From Onsite **and** **Exclude Links From Offsite**	OptiLink starts out with a group of candidate linking pages. These come from the search engine the user has designated and from the list of pages the user enters in the Additional Pages To Include text box. Some of the links to the target page will be from the same domain that the target is on. These are onsite links. Some of the linking pages will be from other domains. Those are offsite links. If you are interested in optimizing your own links, you could choose to exclude all off site links – those that are not from your own domain. OptiLink would simply ignore them. Conversely if you are interested in what other sites say about you, you could choose Exclude On Site Links.
Fetch Linking Page Popularity	This is number of links that the search engine has in its index for the linking pages. The target page is pointed to by linking pages, and the linking pages are pointed to by some number of other pages. That number is the link popularity of the linking page. In the Pages View, this number appears in the Links In column. There are several different applications for OptiLink. If what you are doing is optimizing your link text, then you don't care about the popularity of the pages linking to you. In this case you don't need the linking page popularity, and OptiLink runs faster with this option turned off. If you are looking for linking partners, naturally the linking partners you want will be the ones with higher linking popularity as well as higher Alexa Rank.
Fetch Alexa Rank	Alexa.com maintains a rank of a few million sites on the internet and keeps track of their relative traffic rank. It's like a golf score, a lower number is better. If you go out to alexa.com and type in the url of a site, it will return the relative rank of that site against all the sites it has measured. You will notice that Yahoo.com is number 1. Bear in mind that ranking is not the goal. Traffic and sales are the goal. One way to generate traffic is to have your page rank highly in the search engines. Another way to generate traffic is to have linking partners who have high traffic. It may also be that in searching for the best linking partners you may find that there is a site that has good traffic according to Alexa, but doesn't have very good search engine ranking. Alexa is just another way of analyzing potential linking partners.

If you have purchased the expansion pack, then the option to select Alexa rank will show up on the Command View. When you run an analysis, there will be a column in the Pages View where the Alexa rank is displayed for each page linking to your target page. There are a couple of peculiarities relating to Alexa rank. Zero is not a valid result – it means the page is not in the Alexa index. When you are looking at the Alexa rank remember that zero means that Alexa doesn't rank that page, which implies that it is a low traffic page, not a high traffic page. If you sort on that column you end up with the pages with no rank at all appearing before the pages that are ranked the highest. Keep in mind that lower numbers are better than higher numbers, and zero means no ranking at all.

Network Read Timeout (secs)   This is the time allowed for search engine response.

Summary View

Once the OptiLink analysis engine completes, the cancel button and progress bar are disabled, a COMPLETE message is written to the Log View, and the Summary View is displayed. Or you may look at the Summary View at any time by clicking on the Summary Tab.
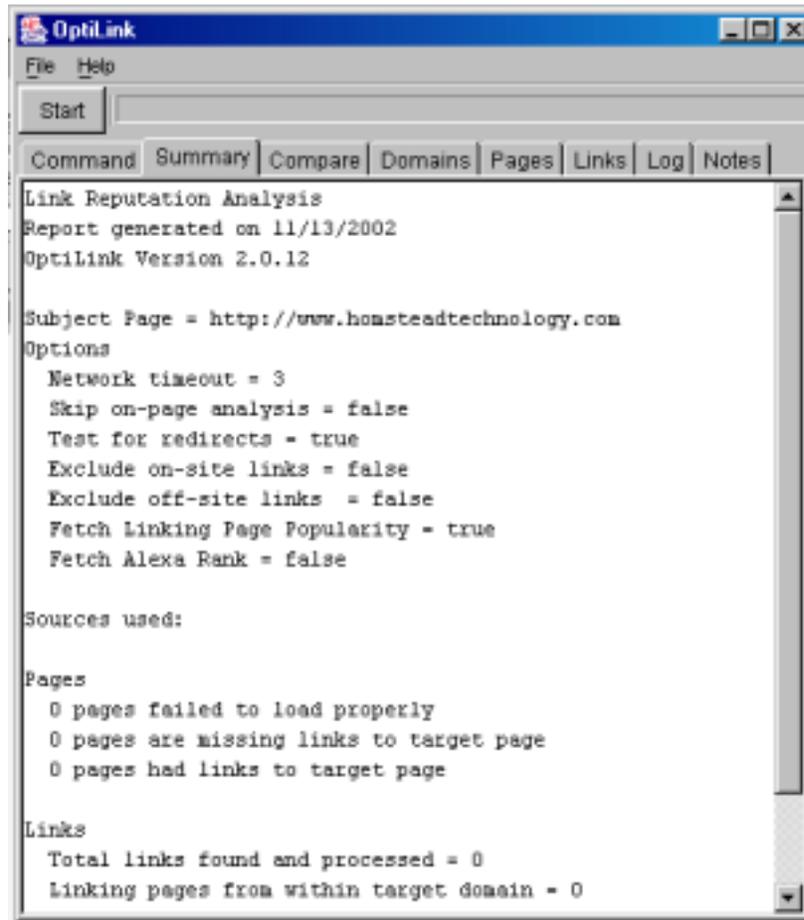
Here you will see a very brief synopsis of what was measured, when, how, and a general outline of the results found.

In order, the view shows the following:

- the date the analysis was run;

- the page that is the target of the analysis;

- the IP address of the target page (for comparison to IP addresses on the Domains View);

- the total number of links to the target page that are reported by the selected search engine;

- the limit on the number of links to consider as selected by the user on the Command View;

- the count of links actually found and processed by OptiLink;

- the links found that originate on pages within the same domain as the target page;

- links that come from Yahoo (generally considered highly authoritative);

- links that come from ODP (also highly authoritative); and

- the number of pages where links could not be found.

This run was done using AOL analyzing the first 10 links. Asking for all the links will give a more thorough picture, but it takes longer. In this case there are only 3 links in the AOL index. This site could use more links. Looking at nothing but the summary, we know where to start. The other views would tell us if the few links we do have are good ones, but this case is primarily about quantity.

When printing an OptiLink report, the summary view is printed first and serves to label the report.

Compare View

This view contrasts on-page and off-page measures of the subject page. The four columns show the following:

Word	The words appearing on the page, in link text leading to the page, and in the titles that contain the links leading to the page;
Page	The frequency of occurrence of the words in the search engine accessible page text;
Link Text	The percentage of inbound links to the subject page that contain the word at least once;
Linking Page Title	The percentage of pages that contain links to the subject page that contain the word at least once.

This view compares and contrasts three different measures of our page: Topic, Reputation, and Clique.

The "Topic" is the subject of the page as determined from its text. Search engines determine the topic by counting all the words on a page and computing the frequency of each word. So, a page of 100 words that contains the word "marketing" 5 times will measure 5% for the topic "marketing." In the "Page" column OptiLink shows the frequency of all words on the target page, measured as closely as possible to the way the search engine does.

The Reputation of a page is a measure of what other pages think the target page is about by using the link text. That is the visible text that is part of the link to the page. For example, if there are 20 links to our page and just 2 of them contain the term "marketing" while 5 of them use the word "banana", we (and the search engines) might conclude that the page might be about marketing, but it is more likely about bananas (or even marketing bananas). For this "banana marketing" page, OptiLink would show 10% (2 of 20) for marketing and 25% (5 of 20) for banana in the Link Text column. These numbers would be shown in the "Link Text" column. Clicking the column header, sorts the table by that column. A

common practice is to graphical links. Such links have no text, but they do count in the number of links, so your Link Text score is reduced. We believe this emulates what the search engines do as well.

The rightmost column, "Linking Page Title", is a measure of the "Clique" that our page is a member of. This measures words, just like link text, but for the titles of the linking pages. Here you'll find what sorts of friends you have and what topics they present to the search engine.

The relative ranking of the values in each column are indicated by a bar in that cell. These bars form a bar graph for each column, and provide an easy way for the user to notice correlations.

This following example is a comparison that anyone should be pleased to have.

	Page	Link Text	Linking Page Title	
	6%	33%	0%	▲
	4%	38%	44%	
	4%	0%	11%	
	3%	0%	0%	
	3%	33%	38%	

The top five most frequent words on the page all lie in an acceptable range for the search engines. The link text used to refer to this page uses three of these top five words. We also see that the pages linking to this page are about roughly the same topic according to their page titles. This should be a page that the search engines have no question about since Topic = Reputation = Clique.

Let's consider the following example of sony.com. In this first view, the table is sorted by frequency on-page, or "topic". As is often the case, some of the most frequent words are "noise words" having little to do with any topic. We do see however good agreement between Topic (the Page column) and Reputation (the Link Text column) for the word "Sony." This should not be surprising because of the brand name nature of the subject. Pages taken from more general categories such as "internet marketing," "pumpkin cheesecake," and "used sports cars" will not generally show this degree of convergence.

Word	Page	Link Text	Linking Page Title
goto	11%	0%	0%
hitbox	11%	0%	0%
nav	6%	0%	0%
sony	3%	28%	57%
shop	3%	0%	0%
blue	2%	0%	0%
spe	2%	0%	0%
the	1%	14%	0%

Notice that 57% of reported pages linking to sony.com contain the word "sony" at least once in the title. Not shown in the figure, is that the second most popular word is "global." This

is owing to the fact that most of the pages used in this (very shallow) example come from sony corporation directory pages.

If you were running this example, and you clicked on the "Link Text" column header, you would see the data sorted by the percentage of links that contain a given word.

Word	Page	Link Text
usa	0%	57%
sony	3%	28%
the	1%	14%
corporation	0%	14%
website	0%	14%
goto	11%	0%

Here we see that "usa" figures most prominently, followed by "sony." The word "usa" however does not appear on the subject page at all (or very little, the percentages are rounded, so a "0%" could be as much as one half of one percent).

When first displayed, the table is sorted by the first column (Page). These percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. The table can be sorted on any of the four columns simply by clicking the left mouse button on the title text. You may also change the order of the columns by dragging the column headings and resize the columns by dragging the column dividers.

The Domains View

Domain Name	Link Count	IP Address
www.evsolar.com	1	205.178.180.127
www.cairns.net.au	1	202.4.31.146
journeytoforever.org	1	216.183.98.113
www.missouribusines...	1	207.160.152.3
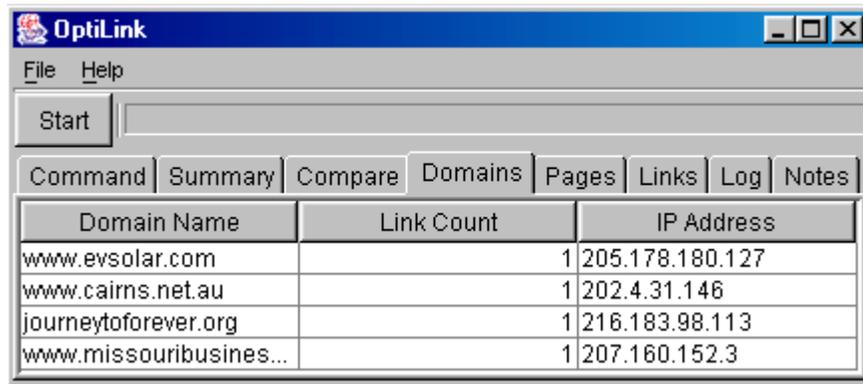
This view lists every domain that contributes links to your target.

The three columns are:

Domain Name   The domains where linking pages were found.

Link Count   The number of links to our target page that were found on pages in the listed domain.

IP Address   The Internet address of the domain.

Sorting The Table

The table may be sorted on any of the three columns by clicking on the column header. The default sort order is by "Link Count," which is To easily find a domain name in a more lengthy table, click the "Domain Name" column label to sort by domain name. To find links that are close together in terms of IP address, sort by the IP address column. This will enable you to see virtual domains and domains in the same Class C address block next to each other.

Example Report

The report below is the sort that everyone ought to have. The link count shows the number of links coming from each domain. It is best if your links are spread out over many domains.

Domain Name	Link Count	IP Address
strictly-search-engine...	2	209.204.204.215
e-publishing.de	2	212.227.193.141
webmasterresources...	2	64.21.110.42
innowebtive.com	1	12.32.114.198
pandia.com	1	128.121.216.166
zulenet.com	1	203.18.38.234
thespot.i-depth.com	1	204.213.247.162
grsoftware.net	1	207.228.245.92
webserver6.spidertra...	1	208.39.143.179
top20rankings.com	1	208.56.227.61
bigbooster.com	1	216.110.32.235
spiderhunter.com	1	216.216.3.188

Missing Links

If the link count for a page is 0, than that page has what is called a "missing link". This is a link that the search engine believes links to your page, but that OptiLink could not find when it examined the page. The search engine returns a list of pages which its index shows link to the page being analyzed. Some of these pages may not actually contain links to your page. There are two reasons for that. One is that the search engine is always out of date. How out of date depends on the search engine and their update schedule. As a horrendously bad example there was a period during which Altavista had not updated their index in months. Some engines seem to be updated more or less monthly. Even so, the web is more dynamic than the search engines ever will be. It may often happen that at the point in time that the search engine spidered a set of sites it found links to the page you are interested in, but since that time, the pages have changed. Maybe that link no longer exists, or maybe the link now leads to a different page.

A missing link can also occur when a site has more than one name on the domain name server. These are called *aliases*. The search engine is actually doing a domain name query and converts it to an IP address and then deals with the IP address. That is a time consuming process, so OptiLink, in order to run rapidly, does not use domain server queries in order to resolve domain names. When a site has multiple names, the search engine will realize that names point to the same site. OptiLink does not.

One way to get information about missing links is to select View Links from the pop up Site Information Menu described in the next section Getting Information About A Site.

Getting Information About A Site

After selecting a site, click the right mouse button to pop up a command menu to get information from this site.

Whois
Headers
Open
View Source
View Links
Copy URL
Copy Table

Whois　　　　Returns data for the domain.

Headers　　　Queries the http header from the server where that web page is hosted. Sometimes you can gain some useful information about the page such as the kind of server or when the page was last modified. This is definitely for the real geek.

Open　　　　Opens the page in your default browser.

View Source　Brings up a very simple edit window on the html source of the page. This is only for a quick peek at the html source. You can do the same thing by opening it in your default system browser and then choosing "view source", and this will typically offer a more complete editor and search facilities.

View Links　　Opens a table of all of the link text and link urls on the page. For example if you are looking at the Pages view and you see a links out of 85, that means there are 85 occurrences of the A-tag in the html. This is useful in diagnosing missing links. View Links will display a list of all the links on the page. You can hunt through that list and see whether there is a link or not.

Copy URL　　Copies just the page url from the currently selected row to the clipboard. This is convenient if you want to put this in the notes section, or in a report, or email.

Pages View

The Pages View shows every page that has one or more links to the target. The columns are:

Page The URL of each page that links to the target page.

Links In The link popularity of the linking page. This is how many links the search engine has in its index that point to that page. OptiLink shows two levels of linking: the number of pages and the actual pages that link to our target page, and the number of links that link to the pages that link to our target page..

Links Out Links Out is the number of links the page has to other pages.

Link Ratio The ratio of links in to links out expressed as an integer percentage

Target Links The number of links from this page to the target page.

Alexa Rank Alexa makes a list of sites, ranking them by their traffic. The rank is the number that indicates the place in the list. Number 1 has the most traffic.

Changing The Order Pages Are Listed In

Click on the "Links In" column heading and you have pages ordered as "Authorities." Click on the "Links Out" column heading and you have "Hub" pages listed first.

These Sites Link To Me – How Do I Contact Them?

OptiLink makes contacting these site owners a breeze. After selecting one of the pages, use the right mouse button menu to display a menu, then left click on Whois to open one of these popular feeder pages in your browser. If it looks like a good match, check the Whois information using OptiLink and contact the site administrator

Getting Information About A Site

After selecting a site, click the right mouse button to pop up a command menu to get information from this site. See the complete description of menu options in the Domains View section.

Links View
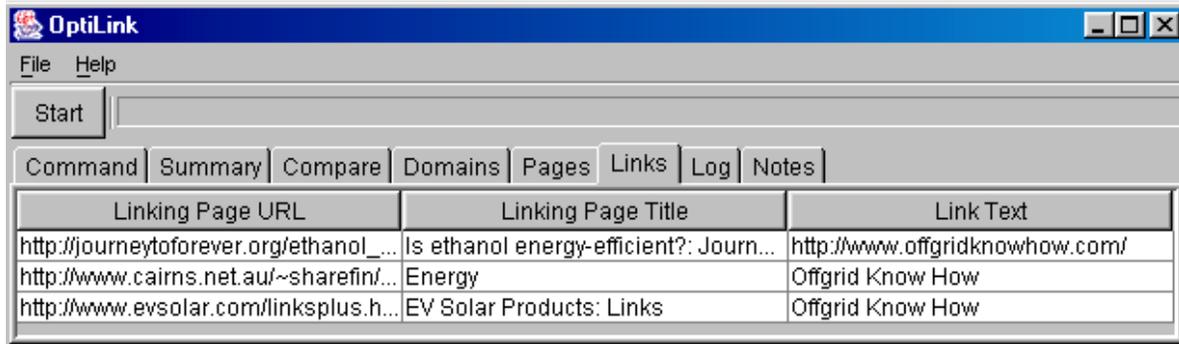
The Links View shows every link to the target page found by OptiLink.

The three columns are:

Linking Page URL — The URL of each page that links to the target page.

Linking Page Title — The title of the linking page—this tells us the topic of the linking page.

Link Text — The text associated with the link on the linking page. This is what the linking page says the target page is about (reputation)

Click the column headers to sort alphabetically by any of the three columns.

Log View

As the OptiLink analysis engine runs it writes informational and error messages to the Log View. Once complete, a COMPLETE message is written and the Summary View is displayed. You can view the log during execution to make sure the program is accessing the network without problem and to see that links are being discovered and processed. Upon completion, check the log if the results shown in the other views seems incomplete or incorrect.

Notes View

The Notes View is an edit window where you can write whatever comments you wish about the report that was generated. This view is available even in the "view only" version of OptiLink, and provides a convenient way for people who are reviewing the report to record information to pass along to the next reviewer.

Checking Results

The OptiLink browser, or an external browser if that option is selected, shows the precise search engine results pages that OptiLink uses as input. Whatever you see in the window that your browser returns is all that OptiLink has to go on. There may be links to your site that are not on pages indexed by the search engine. You may be analyzing a site and be unable to find a certain link. You can verify that OptiLink is operating properly by looking at the results page that the browser displays. The only thing that OptiLink uses is the link results returned by the search engine. This is because the primary goal of OptiLink is to explain the way different pages are ranked so that you can achieve a high ranking. Indeed, there may be many more links than are shown on the link results – they just aren't indexed by the search engine, and because the search engine does not have them indexed, it isn't using them to compute the ranking.

Glossary

This section contains definitions of many of the special terms that are used later in this document. The user will find it helpful to review these terms prior to studying the tutorial.

Authority Page	A page that has a large number of incoming links that use link text centered around a topic.
Class C Block	Refers to IP addresses and the way they are allocated to ISPs. Addresses are allocated to ISPs in a block of 256 addresses, so two IP addresses that are in the same block must be hosted on the same server. To see if two addresses are in the same block, just look at the first three groups of numbers in the IP address. If they are the same, then the addresses are in the same Class C block. For example, 216.122.64.13 and 216.122.64.155 are in the same block but 216.122.65.13 is in a different Class C block.
Clique	The "community" of pages a page seems to belong to. OptiLink shows us the titles of pages that link to us so we can understand what the subject matter of linking pages tends to be. Our assumption, and one the search engines might be making as well, is that "birds of feather, flock together" so a sense of what our page might be about or related to can be seen by looking at the subject of the pages that link to us.
Directory	A web index created by a human. A page is submitted to a human editor, and he manually enters a title and description for your page. The best known directories, and most highly regarded by search engines, are the Open Directory project at dmoz.org and the Yahoo! directory at yahoo.com.
Doorway page	A page whose purpose is to lead the surfer to another page. Doorway pages may be very short and even auto-generated or may be longer and provide meaningful content. The use of doorway pages is hotly debated and it seems clear that very short pages that contain little or no content do not rank well in the search engines. More lengthy pages arguably are not doorway pages at all, depending on whom you ask.
External Link	A link to a page coming from another domain. This is distinct from an Internal Link that is a link from a page within the same domain.
FFA Link	"Free For All"--This is a page full of (typically) unrelated subjects on which anyone may list their site. Links from such pages generally do little or nothing to boost page ranking.
Hallway page	Another name for a site map that contains links to all the pages of a web site. These are useful for end users looking for particular pages. They are also useful for search engine spiders as it makes the site easier to deep crawl.
Inbound link	A link to a web page as differentiated from Outbound Link which is a link on a page to another page.

which is a link on a page to another page.

Internal Link	A link from within the same domain, same as On-site link.
IP	Short for Internet Protocol, this is the addressing and messaging scheme used on the Internet. Every web site has an IP address.
Link	Slang for Hyperlink, this is where one page make reference to anther page using the HTML <A> tag.
Link exchange	Where two webmasters agree to place links to each other's pages.
Link in	A synonym for Inbound Link.
Link Out	A synonym for Outbound Link.
Link popularity	A simple count of the number of Inbound Links to a web page. This is a factor in ranking, but is by no means the end of the analysis.
Link text	The text used in a link. The link text occurs in the HTML code between the <A HREF="…"> and </A> tags.
ODP	"Open Directory Project" found at dmoz.org. It is a human built directory similar in concept to the Yahoo directory.
On-page link	A link from one portion of text to another portion of text all within the same page.
On-page text	The text of a page as differentiated from the text used in links to a page.
On-site link	A link between two pages within the same web site.
Outbound link	A link from a page to another page, either on-site or off-site.
Reputation	A measure of what a page is know for by analyzing the link text of inbound links. As distinct from Topic which is the measure of what a page is about by looking at the text on the page..
Spider	A piece of software that roams around the web. Used by search engines to analyze the content of a pages for insertion it into their index.
Topic	A measure of what a page is about in terms of the visible text on the page. See Word Density.
Topical Directory	A subject focused page that leads the searcher to many relevant resources.
Width (of a topic or reputation)	Refers to how broad or focused your page's topic or reputation is. "Marketing" is very wide. "Internet marketing" is more narrow.
Word density	Word density is measured using the visible text on a page. It is a percentage – a value of 3 means that out of every 100 words of text, the word occurs 3 times. This is the primary tool search engines use to measure a page's Topic.