



The Dirty Little Secrets of Search

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/13/business/13search.html>

dresses

bedding

area rugs

~~Bed, Bath & Beyond~~

~~amazon~~

~~The Gap~~

~~J.Crew~~

“You could imagine a dozen contenders for each of these searches. But in the last several months, one name turned up, with uncanny regularity, in the No. 1 spot for each and every term:

J.C. Penney

What does Google say?

“I can confirm that this violates our guidelines,” said Mr. Cutts during an hourlong interview on Wednesday, after looking at a list of paid links to JCPenney.com.

At 7 p.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, J. C. Penney was still the **No. 1** result for “Samsonite carry on luggage.”

Two hours later, it was at **No. 71.**

At 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Penney was **No. 1** in searches for “living room furniture.”

By 9 p.m., it had sunk to **No. 68.**

Who done it?

The link came through a Web site TNX.net...
Efforts to reach TNX itself last week via e-mail were not successful...

“It was my fault,” Mr. Stevens said. “I posted a job opening on a Stanford Engineering alumni mailing list, and mentioned the name of our company and a brief description of what we do. I think some Google employees saw it.”

Mr. Stevens agreed to meet in mid-January for a dinner paid for by The Times. Asked to pick a “fine restaurant” in his neighborhood, he rather cheekily selected a modern French bistro in Palo Alto offering an eight-course prix fixe meal for \$118. Liquid nitrogen and “fairy tale pumpkin” were two of the featured ingredients.