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MAKE WELL, AUDIT WELL, RANK WELL

HOW TO PRODUCE AND AUDIT YOUR CONTENT TO MAXIMISE SEO PERFORMANCE

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

There is one commonality which links all of the search marketing services – whether it's paid search, content marketing, Organic Search (SEO) or any other – and that's content. However, it's not a case of putting words on a page – while content is nice to have; it absolutely has to serve some kind of purpose.

Purpose is, thankfully, diffuse – you don't need every sentence to be pushing a sale. Whether you're looking to simply engage your audience with humour, assist them with 'how to' content or eBooks, which educate them about a product or service, your content needs to perform some kind of role for audience.

While it may seem cynical, it is possible to view all forms of content as falling somewhere on the buyer's journey – but it's true that even the most tangential content can serve the needs of the brand specifically by serving the needs of consumers.

This can come in the form of providing a home for the formation of a community (see SEO tool developers Moz and SEMRush for example), or by providing informational content in the form of how to blogs and walkthroughs as many construction tool companies do.

While this kind of content does not immediately lead to sales, it does build trust, establish authority and encourage a connection between the consumer and the brand in a way that even good customer service can't do.

Great content, provided the voice is consistent and the audience is always central to its creation, can be a tremendous tool not just to make sales, but to build a community of brand ambassadors from your consumer base.

WHY IS IT THERE?

As stated in the introduction, there needs to be a purpose behind your content – even if it is only to engage your audience somehow. So it is vital to plan your content to ensure that each requirement for your brand and its consumer base is covered by the content on your site which will tend to fall in to one or more of the following types. While we refer to written content predominately, the same is true of all types of content for the purposes mentioned.

PRODUCT/SERVICE PAGES

These will be landing pages for ads, they will be landing pages for clicks from search engine results pages (SERPs); they are there specifically to make a case as to why the product or service is the product or service to solve the query that brought the consumer to them.

Product and service pages serve a uniquely 50/50 relationship between brand and consumer need. They need to be informative enough to make the case for conversion, but not too dense for a consumer to read easily, they need to feature the keyword enough to signal search relevance, but not enough to reduce readability.

WHY IT'S THERE
- To inform the consumer about the product/service
- To rank in search
- To serve as an ad landing page
- To fulfil the consideration and purchase intention phase of the buyer's journey

PRODUCT/SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS

This content, likely to be short form, will – more often than not – form part of your ad copy, and serve as the descriptive copy on pages which list more than one product/service. This copy is likely to be more sales focused, but will still need to be engaging, feature keywords and look to encourage a consumer to click through to the actual product/service page.

WHY IT'S THERE

- To engage consumers
- To encourage click through
- To make a quick sales pitch
- To increase page relevance to search term

INFORMATIONAL CONTENT

This is typically tied in to products and services the brand provides. It will attempt to help consumers use the services or products the brand sells, or achieve goals that are enabled by the same. As such, this content is a useful tool for demonstrating the brand's authority on a subject or industry, as well as building trust with consumers. If you can help them to realise a goal or ambition, it is more likely that they will return again and again for as long as you can continue to assist them, and this can tip the scales of consideration in your favour when the consumer is looking to purchase something that you offer.

WHY IT'S THERE

- To demonstrate authority
- To build consumer relationships
- To encourage repeat site visits
- To earn consumer loyalty for later purchase

COMMUNITY BUILDING CONTENT

Designed to bring people together, this kind of content is one of the least sales focused, and arguably one of the most important forms of content a brand can produce. As mentioned in the introduction, this is something that **Moz** and **SEMRush** do well, as well as a lot of fitness and leisure brands.

By serving as a hub around which a community can be formed, brands can not only vastly improve their overall visibility within an industry; they can build trust and authority.

WHY IT'S THERE

- To build relationships and communities
- To encourage consumers to like, comment, share and otherwise engage
- To increase the reach of your content within the industry and existing communities
- To help and engage the consumer

BEST PRACTICES

WRITTEN CONTENT (WRITING)

Hold the reader's attention. The author Kurt Vonnegut summed this idea up tremendously well in his advice to 'use the time of a total stranger in such a way that he or she will not feel the time was wasted.' Whether you are responsible for your brand's written content or you have delegated the responsibility to another, your main concern must be that your audience, your brand's consumer must leave a piece of content, well… content.

Listen to your writing. In SEO it is not really practicable for a producer of written content to 'have a voice' in the traditional authorial sense of the phrase, because their voice will change depending on the brand for which they are writing. Yet listening to the prose they produce is just as important – if you ever witness a writer mumbling under their breath, they are checking the rhythm of their prose, or losing their minds – weighted slightly in favour of the former.

Avoid clichés like the plague. That is not to say don't ever use cliché – in SEO a shared language is important, and so the cliché aversion of the fiction writer must be somewhat subdued. Clichés become cliché according to their use (for extensive information on cliché, see any and all sports coverage); this offers the writer the ability to tap in to a collective culture, to immediately build a rapport. The danger is, of course, overuse – that is a stonewall fact.

Edit, then edit again. This is again applicable to all forms of writing, but is probably more difficult in SEO than with any other form due to extremely tight deadlines. There is, in this regard, a necessity for the SEO writer to abandon all sense of ego and allow suggestions and criticism to pour in from across a team of other experienced writers to help them polish their work – generally in-between writing further pieces.

Have something to say. This is another tip borrowed from fiction which takes on new significance within SEO. The SEO writer will not always be familiar with a subject they are writing about, or may not have an instant opinion or question about the topic, but good writing, engaging writing depends upon having something to say. Experience will make this easier for an SEO writer but whatever a brand is producing it must speak to the consumer.

Increase your vocabulary. That is not to say that you should seek to be sesquipedalian in your prose – pretension does not make for good prose, but words are the building blocks of a writer and the more blocks you have, the quicker and higher you can build your tower.

WRITTEN CONTENT (FOR SEO)

As search marketing and search engines become more advanced, stock answers to certain questions become impossible to give. However, it is possible to give some guidelines as to what makes for effective content for organic search purposes.

Unique

Google and other major search engines demand that content is unique to your site and, wherever possible, not available elsewhere on the internet (though there are some exceptions such as syndicalisation or translation). They also don't want to see the same content appearing many times on your own site.

While pages may contain elements which are duplicated, duplication should be kept to a minimum. Pages which are exact matches of other pages will have reduced rankings or will not be remembered by Google at all. Sites with significant numbers of duplicate pages may see their rankings reduced on a site-wide level.

Substantial

Written content, such as blogs and news articles, must be valuable to your audience. If you are writing on a subject covered by your competitors, search engines will expect your content to be as, or more, substantial than theirs and of a similar quality. If your pages have less unique, relevant content than your competitors, they will be considered less valuable and will consequently not compete with them well in SERPs.

Pages with significant amounts of content are also more likely to rank well for long tail phrases related to a main search term due to associated terms and synonyms which increase relevance. However, excessively long content should be avoided. Instead, it is recommended that you split lengthy articles into sub articles or hubs of related pages.

Relevant

The content of every page needs to be relevant to the subject matter of that page and to the keywords and search terms at which it is targeted. If content is not relevant, it should be moved onto another page or deleted altogether. Google will rank pages with significant amounts of unrelated or irrelevant content lower in SERPs.

Engaging

Creating content that your audience will want to read should be your first priority. However, to see real results, your content should inspire further engagement. This engagement may take the form of a blog comment, a 'like', 'share' or other promotion on social media, an eBook download, or a response to a call to action.

By analysing your bounce rates, page views and other engagement statistics using Google Analytics and other tools, you can accurately measure the engagement levels of your website. This can help you to find out what your audience is interested in and build a strong content strategy.

Websites that search engines do not consider engaging can suffer from low rankings, while websites which are considered engaging rank more highly. Beyond the search engine results pages, content that incites a response in your audience can have a significant effect on conversion rates, helping your business to meet its overall commercial objectives.

VISUAL CONTENT

Use contrast. By contrast we do not mean 'clash' – think of it in the same way as fashion. You want colours to stand out, but also to complement one another.

Use consistent font and colour palettes. It is important for any brand to develop a consistent, canonical colour and font palette to impart a sense of order even when graphics deal with vastly different subjects. You want your consumers to have the reaction to your brand that they do to Coca-Cola or McDonalds – you want them to be able to recognise you on text and colour alone.

Keep it simple. Your graphics do not have to scream and shout from every pixel. Don't be afraid of allowing your graphical elements the space to breathe. The less you do to convey the message, the less work your audience will do in receiving it.

VISUAL CONTENT (FOR SEO)

ALT ATTRIBUTE

The alt attribute is vital when placing images anywhere on your site. Not only is it the text which will be voiced by screen readers, it is also how Google attributes subject relevance to any image. It is best to approach it with the screen reader in mind, however, as this will ensure the best result for both purposes – as Wikipedia states:

"Keep in mind the purpose and context of an image and what would be useful to someone who cannot see it."

VIDEO/AUDIO CONTENT

Use the right equipment. If you can't tell your ABUS from your Go Pro, this is going to be an important place to start. The video camera you use to film a sports day will not cut it when filming a presentation, in addition to this is required a working knowledge of lighting rigs and sound recording, the failure to address any of which could leave you with a wasted budget.

Pay attention to audio. If you have a voiceover, ensure that voiceover is done by a professional or, at least, a very proficient speaker. You ideally want the message rather than the voice in which it is conveyed to be the most important thing. Also, never 'make-do' with a take if the audio is competing with background noise. If a plane flies past, or a boy-racer's car roars by in the wrong gear, I'm afraid you'll just have to take it again from the top.

Edit to your audience. Knowing when to shut-up is just as important as knowing what to say, if you know your audience, and the social channel you are aiming to use for your video's distribution will tell you some of this, you will know how long their attention span is. Do not exceed this.

Tell a story. Even the most factual video can tell a story, and by this we're don't mean videos should be dramatised or fictionalised, but that they should have a beginning a middle and an end, and that the consumer should feel compelled to finish watching.

Be entertaining. Everyone likes to be entertained, so even though a brand may not operate within the most entertaining industry, there will always be ways to make a message entertaining – whether this is with graphics or cartoons, or simply a well written script, the reason you are making a video is to capture an audience and the best way to do this is to captivate them.

VIDEO/AUDIO CONTENT (FOR SEO)

Most video and audio content will be hosted externally (see our eBook which deals specifically with **SEO for YouTube**), but when embedding the content on your site, you should ensure that – as with images – the alt text is clear and descriptive. The search engine may not be able to read the video or audio, but it can contextualise it from the alt text.

KEYWORD PLANNING AND PREVALENCE

DEVELOPING A KEYWORD STRATEGY

Keyword research is a vital part of any organic search campaign, whether it is used to mould onpage copy or to develop brand or product positioning – it is imperative that it is not only done, but done thoroughly and well.

As latent semantic indexing (LSI) has improved with the advent of the Hummingbird update in 2013 and the new levels of query relevancy offered by RankBrain, a lot of brands and agencies have begun to place less importance on the role of keywords in content. The worrying possibility this raises, however, is that, though it frees our writers to express themselves with fluency and style without having to rely on keyword anchoring, the reduced importance of keywords in on-page copy can sometimes carry over into keyword targeting. Keywords should not and must not be overlooked, and their importance in attracting a potential consumer underrated.

Take, for example, someone looking to make a purchase for a new hobby. They are interested in the hobby, but lack a degree of knowledge when it comes to hobby specific key terms; in this case, they are going to be searching for more general keywords and are going to rely on brands using search marketing strategies that account for this.

The best keyword research will identify themes – around price size, colour, etc. as well as gaps in the market with low competition from competitors. By grouping such terms into 'themes' (groups of keywords), they can be converted into pages of content which will represent a thorough match to a number of targeted searches, increasing relevancy and usefulness for consumers – again heightening user experience (UX) at the same time as improving chances of conversion.

This is a good time to start thinking about your buyer personas, what are they looking for, what will they want to know and at what stage in the buying cycle will they want to know it? Think about how you search on a phone as opposed to on a laptop. Are there differences in your own search methods from one device to another? What are your intentions across devices?

Think about the levels of interest and expertise possessed by your buyer personas – are consumers looking for brand specific items, using specific industry jargon more or less likely to want to buy or to need information than those searching for generic, non-specific terms? How can your keyword targeting nurture the buyer journey by delivering the right content at the right time? If you have run PPC campaigns for your goods or services in the past, there may be a wealth of useful information available to you in your Search Query reports.

Once you have assembled lists of key terms and questions, use online tools (such as Google's Keyword Planner) to quantify search density and, therefore, which of these keywords, terms and themes should be the focus of your efforts. Ideally you're looking for the golden ration of low competition and high volume. Also, use Analytics to monitor in-site searches – those terms which consumers are searching for while on your page – as well as popular landing pages and seek to consolidate these terms externally.

SIMPLIFIED KEYWORD THEME FLOWCHART
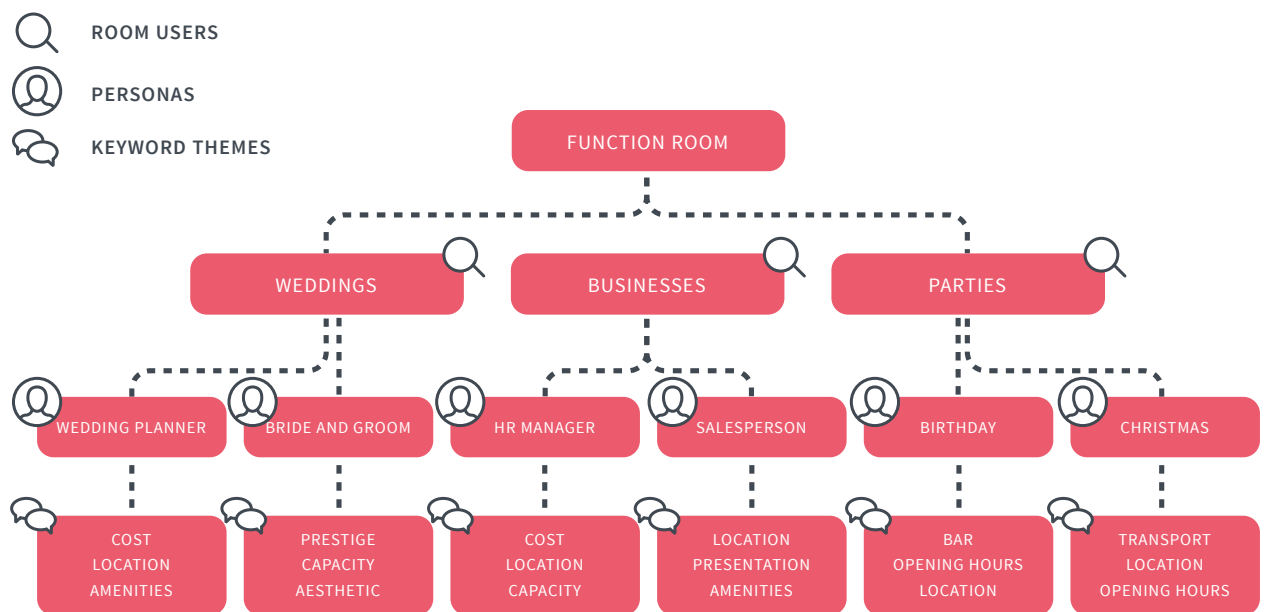
WHY WE SHOULD WRITE (IN PART) FOR ROBOTS

'Write for people, not robots' has been the clarion call to copywriters for almost a decade (at least, since the **Panda update**), but is that still the case? The answer is both yes and no.

When the Panda update was first released in 2011, it found keyword stuffing, scraped and thin content and, as such, it resulted in a significant number of penalties.
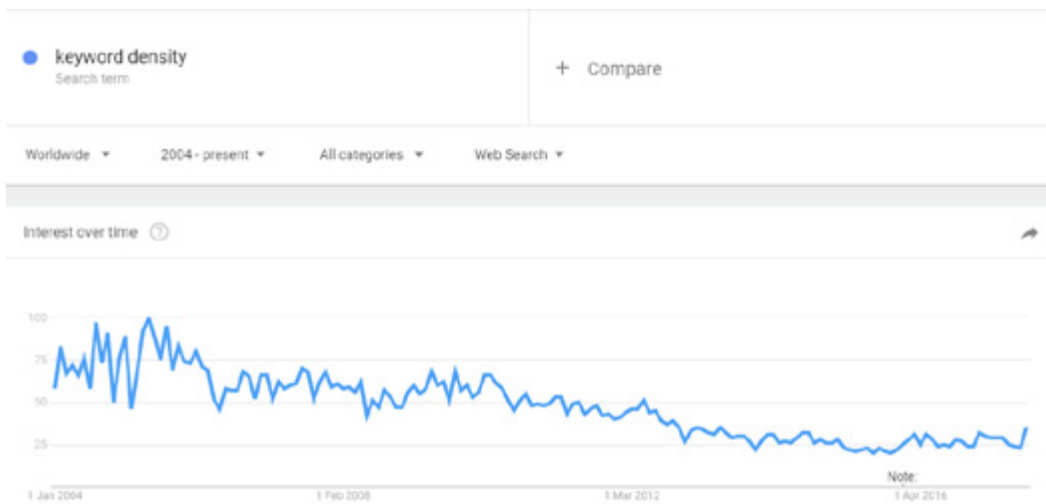
Searches for 'keyword density' in steady decline since 2011 – Google Trends

Beginning with the introduction of Hummingbird in 2013 – which broadened the Google algorithm's lexicon – and continuing with gradual improvements to the search engine's capacity for latent semantic analysis, there have been a series of developments which have seen the algorithm's ability to parse context and meaning grow considerably.

The culmination of this advancement, to date, has been RankBrain – an artificial intelligence system designed to enhance the relevance of SERPs and which (while there is some question over the weighting of each factor across queries) has been referred to by Google as the third most important ranking factor overall.

To clarify, the call to put readers before robots was good and timely advice – for too long, in an effort to game the SERPs, web copy was restricted by the insistence of many agencies and in-house departments on keyword density targets and strict word count limits.
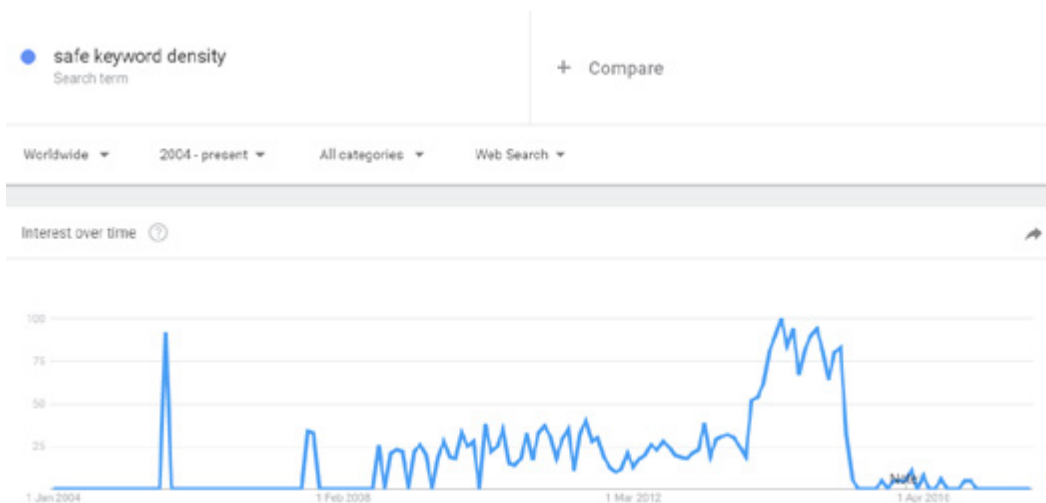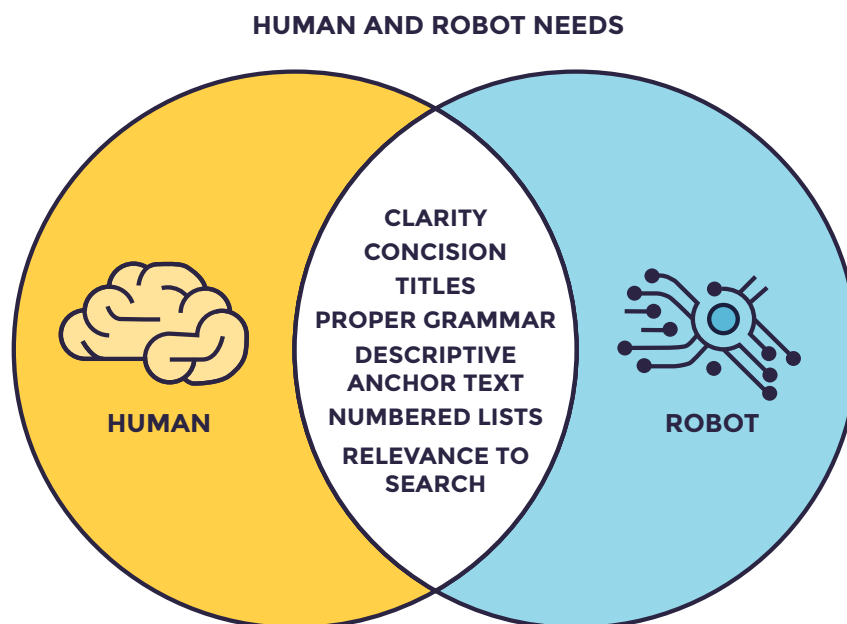

Panda takes its toll – searches for 'safe keyword density' grow as Panda updates roll out – Google Trends

However, as various advancements emerge, it's necessary for marketers to realise that robots are an increasingly important audience for our work – and one we must often please before it reaches our audience's human component. Happily, the Venn diagram of the content needs of people and robots overlaps more and more over time.

Google at one point released five guides outlining what it considers to be high quality content, which Search Engine Land reviewed, **publishing some key takeaways from these guides** – my only qualm with the piece being that it states these guidelines are meant for 'technical content creators', implying that there could be another variety in modern marketing.

Realistically, all content creators must now be technical to some extent to ensure success of their content. While there will always be outliers that succeed seemingly without any attention paid to rankings or audience, they are and will always be outliers.

What is noticeable is that, along with some standard writing tips, there are a number which are clearly aimed at simplifying the meaning of content for machines.

HUMAN AND ROBOT NEEDS

CLARITY
CONCISION
TITLES
PROPER GRAMMAR
DESCRIPTIVE
ANCHOR TEXT
NUMBERED LISTS
RELEVANCE TO
SEARCH

HUMAN

ROBOT

*Rough overlap of human and robot requirements for information parsing.*

Using <strong> and <b> for delineating importance and for visual emphasis respectively, for example, will make zero difference to the average human, they're both just bold to the eye, but it will help a machine to better understand your writing.

In addition, there are tips against long sentences and metaphors alongside those against slang, technical jargon and exclamation points. All of which, after all, are very difficult for machines to understand.

Slang and jargon can have meanings peculiar to areas and to industries, for example, while exclamation points offer no insight into where the emphasis of the exclamation should be placed - unlike <strong> which does, while metaphors can be difficult for machine learning to contextualise.

Essentially, what we're seeing in the guidelines at the moment is a simplified lesson plan for the artificial intelligences that will one day rule the SERPs and, while we have to ensure that content is written for a human audience, so long as there are limitations to what the Google algorithm can understand, we need to help it on its way. While the machine is learning, we have to make sure that we're not pitching above its head.

For those in digital marketing, this means learning to juggle the needs of both our human and mechanical masters more efficiently. This does not mean disregarding your human audience, but requires us to sign-post meaning, wherever possible, behind the scenes by rendering our content in a manner that is easily converted to data – through proper deployment of JSON, HTML and any other relevant markup (see the 'Important HTML elements' section).
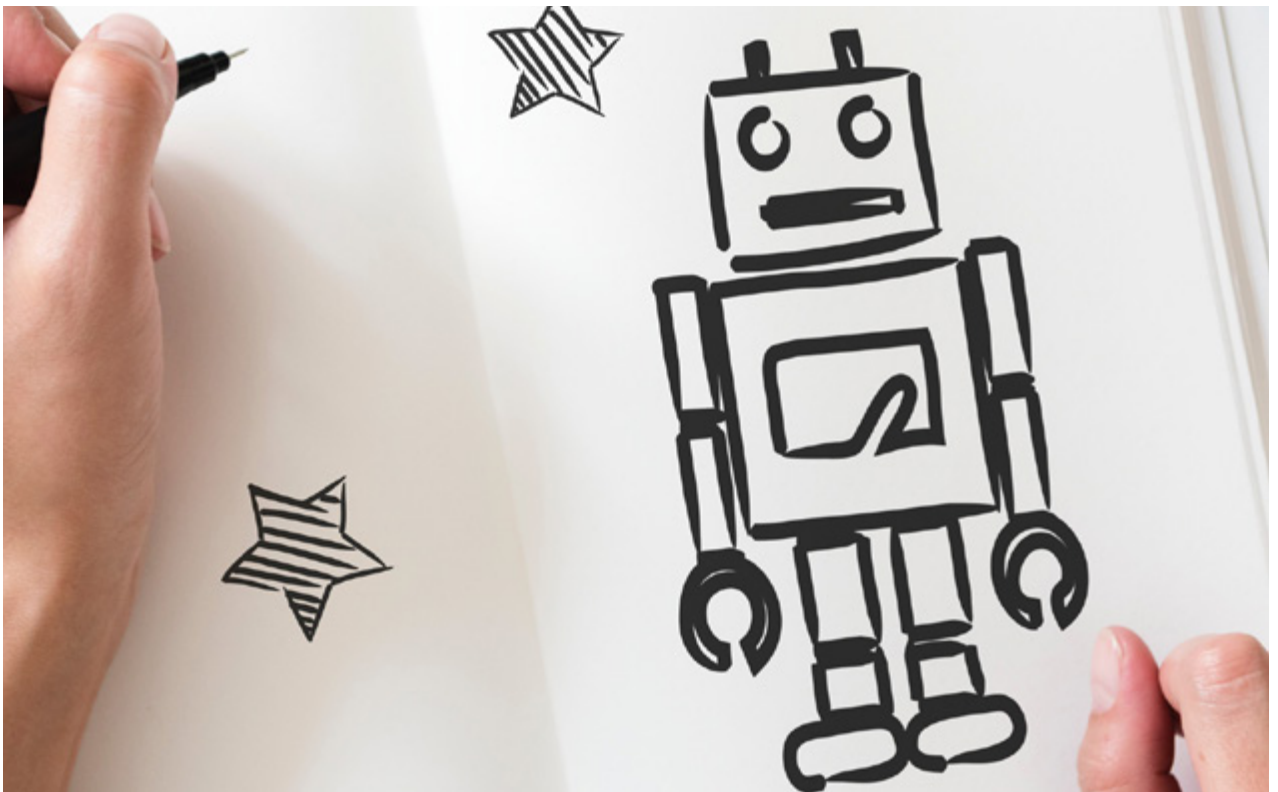
KEYWORD DENSITY & INSERTION

Ensuring that target keywords appear in the copy is essential, and is termed 'keyword insertion'.

In addition to being present, the position of keywords on the page should also be considered. For this reason, it tends to be a best practice recommendation that the keyword features in the title (the nearer the beginning the better), in the opening paragraph and in some of any subsequent subheadings.

Keyword density is a percentage value representing the number of times a keyword appears as a proportion of the overall copy. While there is no definitive recommendation on what constitutes too high or too low a percentage, the word 'natural' is often mentioned – as such, we can offer some basic principles to consider:

- In short content (200-500 words), relatively high keyword density is natural
- In longer content (500+), relatively low keyword density is natural
- For short or one-word target phrases, higher keyword density is natural
- For long tail target phrases, lower keyword density is natural
- For technical articles featuring industry-specific terminology with few synonyms, high keyword density is natural
- For more general articles, in which synonyms can be used to vary the language, lower keyword density is natural

KEYWORD PROMINENCE

Keyword prominence refers to the positioning of keywords on a web page. As mentioned previously, Google gives prominence to words placed near the beginning of a piece of copy. Therefore, target keywords should be placed close to the beginning of the opening paragraph.

Other search engines also give weight to keywords placed towards the end of the document, so it may serve the content well to mention it again in the concluding section of your content.

LATENT SEMANTIC INDEXING

On LSI, Google has been recorded stating:

"Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI) is an information retrieval technology that retrieves information from websites and information repositories based on the vector space model of document classification. Through the use of LSI technology, relevant information can be retrieved from a collection of documents based on its meaning or concept, even if the document does not have the search word.

"Latest semantic indexing allows a search engine to determine a relevancy of a page not only with its search query, but also with the context of the search query. In other words, LSI helps search engines to retrieve data based on the context of the search query. For instance, search engines are capable of identifying that the terms "laptop" and "notebook computers" are conceptually similar.

"Google has long been using Latent Semantic Indexing for AdSense to display relevant advertising on AdSense publisher's websites. Undeniable evidence suggests that Google is also giving LSI more emphasis in its search algorithm to provide its visitors with relevant information."

Broadly, this indicates that Google's understanding of subject matter and themes has improved, and it no longer relies entirely on target keywords to deduce meaning.

As a result, keywords, synonyms and variations which are related to the subject matter of your page can now rank even if they are not stated exactly on the the page. However, in practical terms this only works when competitors have not created content which directly targets the term and uses the variations and alternative phrases.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL LINKING

Links are the currency of online authority. Not only are they a method of reducing the friction in navigation for consumers of digital content, they are also a method of communicating that one online entity trusts another. As such, a link from one site will pass on an indeterminate amount of the linking site or page's authority to the next site or page. This can help improve the rankings of a site or page, but it can also have negative impact. That's why it's important to do both internal and external linking well (for advice on link building – the earning of external links to your site – download our guide 'The Science Behind Link Building' here).

INTERNAL LINKING

Navigability is an important part of the customer journey and crawler indexing, but internal linking is also vital to the flow of Domain Authority (DA), Page Authority (PA) and, as a result of all these, to website conversions.

Even a relatively simple journey and authority flow (such as that of Click Consult itself) is a web of sprawling interconnectivity when visualised.
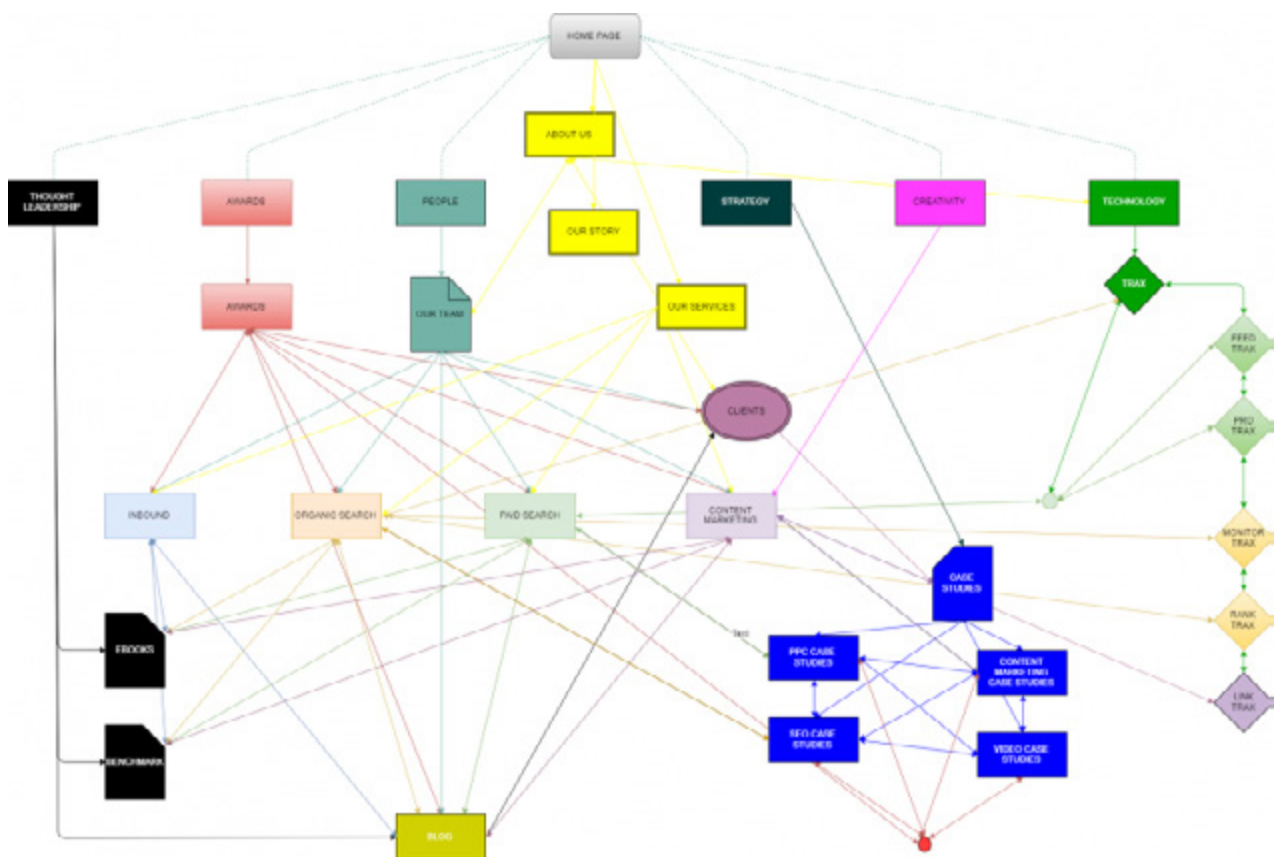
With this branching complexity in mind, it is vital for brands to perform regular audits of their site structure for both user experience (UX) and authority flow in order for their site to be performing at the level it should be.

HOW TO BEGIN AUDITING YOUR STRUCTURE

The first step, while laborious, is to create a flow chart of your current site – which can be done by following and recording links from your home page (it is better for visibility to do this in levels – so choose a level at which each flow chart will cut off). Once you have done this, you can then create new charts beginning at each sub level.

These flow charts will serve to illustrate where your site is at present, but should also reveal potential opportunities for both linking and possible new pages – these should be recorded in an action table which you can then implement when you've finished the audit.

For your actions table, you should bear in mind the two differing types of intention that will be behind navigation of your site – there is the brands intention (to funnel users through to conversion) and there is user intention (to answer queries and research potential purchases). If it helps, you can add separate columns for actions that would benefit the brand's aim and for the aim of the consumer – but you should always try to blend these wherever possible.

INTERNAL LINKING ACTIONS				
LINKED PAGE	CURRENTLY LINKS TO	LINKS REQUIRED	WHERE	PAGE OPPORTUNITIES
USE THIS TO ENTER THE FIRST PAGE IN A LINK CHAIN	USE THIS TO IMPUT PAGES CURRENTLY LINKED TO	USE THIS TO LIST POSSIBLE LINKING OPPORTUNITIES	USE THIS TO INDICATE WHERE IN THE CONTENT THE LINK SHOULD BE PLACED	USE THIS TO LIST PAGES WHICH COULD POTENTIALLY FILL CURRENT GAPS
USE THIS TO ENTER THE FIRST PAGE IN A LINK CHAIN	USE THIS TO IMPUT PAGES CURRENTLY LINKED TO	USE THIS TO LIST POSSIBLE LINKING OPPORTUNITIES	USE THIS TO INDICATE WHERE IN THE CONTENT THE LINK SHOULD BE PLACED	USE THIS TO LIST PAGES WHICH COULD POTENTIALLY FILL CURRENT GAPS
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HOW TO SEE WHERE YOUR CONSUMERS WANT TO GO

Provided you have **site search reports** enabled in analytics, you can gather a lot of information as to possible consumer led linking opportunities from the report.

To view this report, under behaviour in Google Analytics, select the 'Site Search' option and then 'Search Pages', then add 'Search Term' as a secondary dimension. This will give you the page from which the search was made and also the search term that was used. Provided you have content which matches the search term, you can look to place a link to the content from the start page.

This is the closest brands can really come to adopting what, in urban planning, is called **'desire paths'** – a consumer led shortcut from one point to another.

There's a fantastic blog over at Moz on **how to optimise your on-site search** – which, according to a study quoted therein, 84% of brands fail to do. Ongoing testing and optimisation should be factored in to work flow for all such tasks – it is absolutely insufficient to do this only once.

HOW TO OPTIMISE FOR AUTHORITY FLOW

Your site mapping from earlier in the process will help here, as it will give you the direction and flow of authority. While your homepage will almost always have the majority of your inbound links pointed to it, there will no doubt be some better performing pages lower down in the substrata of your site.

Authority, even internally, is passed through links so to ensure the pages you want to earn that authority are receiving their share, it is necessary to run a content report in whichever tool you presently use (**Search Console** has one if you don't use any third party tools).

Once you have downloaded your top performing content (Search Traffic > Links to Your Site in Search Console), you can select the best performing 10-20 pages as a start to factor in to your linking strategy.

Ideally, you want each link to pass authority to the largest proportion of the site it can – therefore, these pages should be explored in the context of the whole site, with links placed on each of the pages, the higher up the chain you can link to naturally, the more pages it will trickle down to. However, these top performing pages can provide a ranking boost to relevant blogs and product pages by linking appropriately to folders further downstream.

PAGE STRUCTURE

As a bit of a bonus link – let me point you to a great discussion of page structure on an old **Whiteboard Friday**. Not only does it offer some fantastic and actionable information on the topic, but there is a section in there titled '5 big goals that matter' which could just as easily apply to internal linking and site structure as to the content on a page.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

The most important thing to do following this process is to ensure that there is a plan in place that keeps future content and pages in line with the brand's internal linking strategy and which is capable of responding to changes in an agile manner. As with all things in search marketing, nothing is ever truly finished – so it's important to set aside time to keep your internal linking up to date.
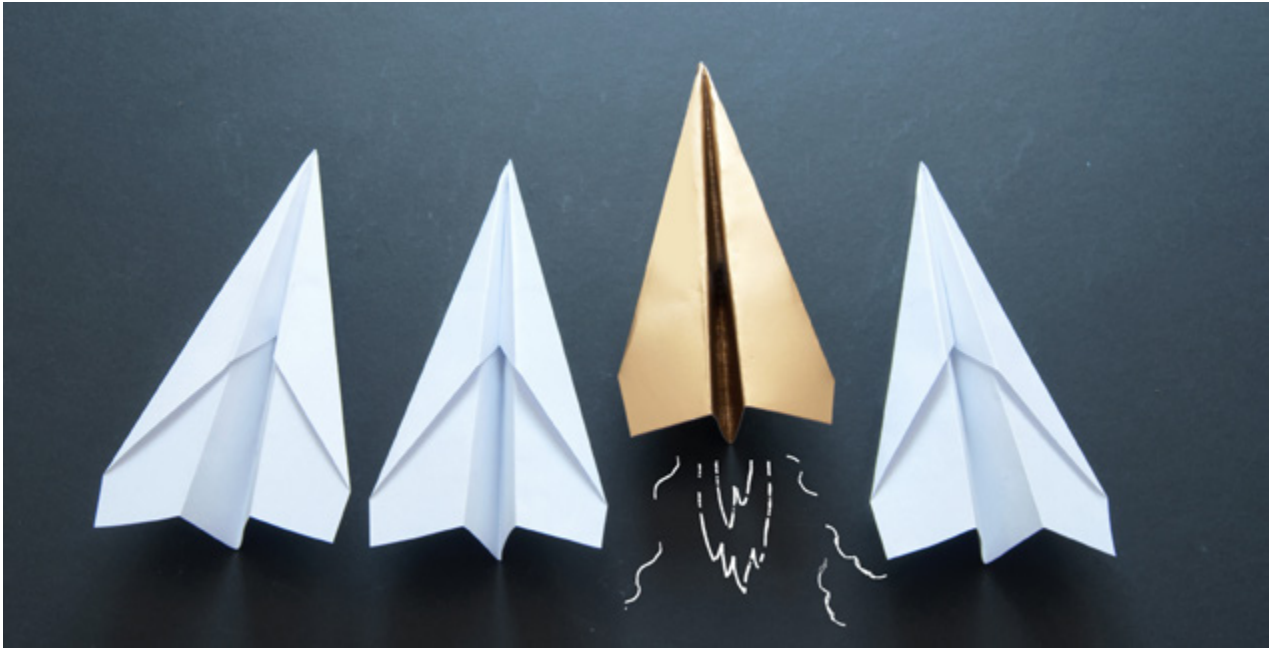
SUBJECT AUTHORITY

By subject authority, we mean two things here. Firstly there is perceived authority with consumers – while some politicians may be tired of experts, expertise remains a positive thing amongst consumers (with many brands trading specifically on a history of expertise, even on a national history of quality in the case of several German manufacturers).

In this first case, subject authority communicates both a dedication to and a passion for your specialty area. By producing content which showcases your expertise in your industry, and the potential for your products/services to help overcome challenges within it, you can cement yourself as a go to brand for industry expertise in the mind of the consumer – and by association, the likely quality of your product.

The second, and at least equally important meaning of subject authority is that which is built up with search engines which are able to build up associations (and are getting better at it all the time – see a recent **Google patent**). These connections and associations are built up over time, and form part of a piece of content's perceived relevance to a search query – whether from consumer activity (such as click through), the anchor text of links to the page and many more.

It is important that content you produce is sending the right relevancy signals to search engines and that is something that begins with ensuring that content seeks to address specific search queries, that you avoid keyword cannibalisation (multiple pages targeting the same keyword, sending mixed signals about importance to search engines) and seek to establish your site and specific pages as an authority in your industry.

MARK UP AND TECHNICAL BEST PRACTICE

META TITLE TAG

Though it is ultimately limited by pixel length, your meta title tag should be as accurate, concise and precise a description of your content as is possible in 56 characters. It is one of the most important sources of information for Google's algorithm when it comes to deciding relevance (and therefore affects SERPs position) as well as aiding in the ease of browsing for the consumer – it should always contain key terms relating to the page.

META DESCRIPTION

The best explanation of the 'meta description' tag is as a short summary of the page – a clear and concise 155 character description of the on page content (with a minimum of 90 characters recommended). However, as this is the text visible in SERPs, it should also serve to draw consumers to the page – featuring, wherever possible, some form of enticement or call to action. A good 'meta description' can drastically improve your click through rate.

Though your brand may publish a novelty blog titled '10 uses for unwanted Christmas knitwear', to keep the bounce rate low and your potential readers are given a full and attractive account of onpage copy (deterring the searchers that may be looking for recycling or upcycling advice), you may wish to describe it as: "A Humorous List Of Unexpected Uses For An Unpopular Christmas Gift".

HEADER TAGS

Header tags summarise the pages you create for both consumers and search engines – and should be easily read by both.

Though wit and humour are desirable for a page title, it is more important in the digital age for it to convey the information for which you wish to rank. While 'Book lack in Ongar' is a great headline, Google's search algorithm is looking for 'Funding cuts for Essex libraries result in severe book shortages' for search queries regarding library funding. Though there is no definitive limit, best practice dictates that you should attempt to keep your titles unique, between 60 and 80 characters, and feature keywords near the beginning.

`<H1></H1>`

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`<H2></H2>`

This is a more appropriate place to flex your creative muscle and generally serves as a sub-title. The h2 tags are also good for use as stand-alone subheadings when seeking to break up content for ease and speed of understanding. Again keywords should feature somewhere in the subheading – as each header is important to framing the relevance of page to search queries.

`<H3></H3>`

This is a tertiary emphasis tag – or your 'sub-subheading', formatting of which should adhere to its role as a paragraph leader, or stand-out line. As above, ensure this header is relevant to the text it precedes or is linked to – using keywords from the text to add relevance to the passage to promote ease of reader and search engine understanding.

SEMANTIC MARKUP AND SCHEMA.ORG

When optimising a location specific landing page, it is vital you employ semantic markup, to allow Google to understand the local context of the information shown on the page, thereby allowing your landing page to show for location specific search queries.

Use of Schema.org allows the page to be understood as specific to a location and therefore enables your landing pages to be tailored to local audiences.

CONCLUSION

Content is not only important, it is perhaps only second to your product or service in its importance to your brand. The right content strategy, the right keywords targeted in the right voice at the right time can be the difference between success and failure for start-ups or between meeting and exceeding targets for established brands.

While content has inaccurately developed a reputation for being difficult to measure in terms of return on investment (ROI), Click Consult has been among those repeating that not only can the ROI of content be measured, but it can be grown. Content is a skill – especially in an era that demands a level of technical expertise from those who write it and, as such, there is no room for underinvestment in such an important facet of your brand's online presence.

Hopefully, using the information in this eBook, you'll be able to better understand the methods behind creating and auditing your content and push your site on and past your competition.

CLICKCONSULT ®

EXPERTS IN SEARCH. SIMPLE.

ABOUT US

Located in North West England, Click Consult is a multi award-winning search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC), with over 70 professionals employed and with a portfolio of over 60 clients from across the UK, Europe, Americas and Australia.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year 2018, adding to its long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within both RAR's and Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Blog
Click Consult regularly posts actionable insights on its blog – dealing with all aspects of search marketing. From technical SEO to PPC, content marketing and Analytics advice, the Click Consult blog has something for everyone of any ability.

eBooks
Click Consult produces in depth eBooks on all aspects of search marketing on a regular basis, dealing with the latest best practices, changes to standard practices, methods of improvement and more.
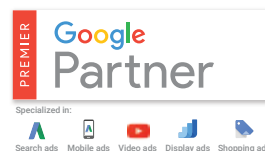
Infographics
Sometimes what you need is a quick point of reference about complex subjects. Thanks to its team of highly talented designers, Click Consult is also able to distil its vast experience into easy to understand visual content.

Follow us on Google+, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, or to find out what Click Consult can do for you, call:

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OUR ACCREDITATIONS

OUR AWARDS

OUR TECHNOLOGIES