

ON- PAGE

QUICK WINS

OVER 50+ TIPS TO ADD TO YOUR PLAYBOOK
FOR BETTER SEO RESULTS.

DANIEL CUTTRIDGE

Why this book?

When I first wrote this book in 2019 I didn't imagine it would be almost 3 years later that I would be updating it. So many of the methods and tips in the book have held up incredibly well for an industry that moves so fast.

This is the second edition, updated and improved for 2022. You'll find many of the same tips are still in the book, maybe reading it again will remind you of them, or if this is your first time, then most of them will be brand new to you.

Not all of these tips will be equally useful to you, but that's the beauty of the book. It's a playbook of 'quick wins' you can refer to as and when needed. With over a dozen new tips added to the book you'll find there is something in here for people of all stages & abilities.

I recommend that you look at tips and quick wins like these as your personal library of methods...

Methods that can be effortlessly introduced to the various frameworks and strategies that you use.

You never know when they're going to be useful.

You will use some more often than others.

Some may simply change the way you think.

I hope you enjoy the book.

Thanks,
Daniel

About the author

Daniel Cuttridge built his first website in 2004. Over the last 18 years he has built and worked on over 1,000 websites.

Working in SEO since 2012 he has successfully owned and sold an agency, built dozens of affiliate sites, and now works primarily in display ads while also running his newsletter.

He has won several awards for his work as a web designer. And has also been featured in various publications and blogs such as WHAT THE AFF, Drift, AuthorityHacker, The Startup, and more.



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POWER FACTORS ARE EVERYTHING

I can see how it could be tempting to find a number of tips in this book and rush out to apply them to a piece of content right away. However, that would be a mistake.

Most of the time you should make a few changes at once and you should focus on the power factors to begin with.

You should never change too much at once because otherwise it's impossible to know what exactly worked and what didn't.

Hey mate. I meant to tell you, I rescued all (or at least most) of the pages that I had hit by the google update.



all i did was rewrite the opening paragraphs for each one, and ran them through Google's NL API to check that the category was clear enough

So what are some of the main power factors you should focus on adjusting to get big boosts?

- Page Title
- Headings
- Introduction
- Keyword Frequency / Density
- Topics and Entities

These are the main ones where I'd always look to get things as optimized as possible before doing anything else.

ADD MISSING TOPICS TO YOUR CONTENT

One thing that will help improve your rankings is covering topics that are expected to be covered.

Wait, how can a machine or an algorithm expect anything?

Knowledge graphs, vectors, and more!

Adding in missing terms is great, but when you add in a whole topic it works even better.

If you were writing a section about ketchup, well, you're probably going to mention tomatoes. If you were simply adding in the word ketchup then you're going to miss all those other related terms that are expected and important.

You can use <https://missingtopics.com/> to help identify topics from wikipedia pages, competing pages, and more.

Results: 73

hosting companies dedicated hosting company server performance server errors server performance time linux servers
better servers hosting services managed hosting services hosting provider virtual private servers similar companies
google search console wordpress sites seos vultr network issues new pages network connectivity issues
better organic search performance security issues search engines common issues vps options customer support
network errors content management system google states certain services dns errors software configurations
managed security features configurations differences wordpress users network timeouts higher traffic loads
technical expertise different classes unlimited options text content shared hosting operating system better speed
high-traffic websites linux ubuntu high ttfb scores low quality connection timeouts entire ip blocks lower scores
different accounts ip neighborhoods heavy traffic loads extra features different types separate processes
high-level technical concepts long-term support version different c-class ips complete control certain technologies
data locations ssh access debian distros mo vultr bad configs caching instructions insane value alarm bells
ssd cloud instances dropped packets little or no support september 2021 precisely what

[Copy to clipboard](#)

Then all you have to do is make sure the most important ones get covered in the article.

In general, you'll be wanting to use more and more research tools as time goes on to keep improving your content beyond what is possible without the efficiencies they bring.

STEAL COMPETITORS INTERNAL LINKING STRATEGY

In our industry we love to reverse engineer.

Though when we do we're usually focused on backlinks.

Instead, one thing I've had constant success with is reverse engineering top competitors internal linking strategies.

Luckily it's got a lot easier this year thanks to a new feature on Ahrefs.

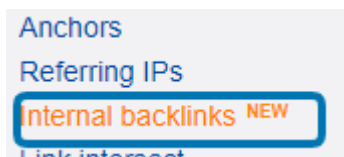
To discover anchor text and supporting content:

Step 1: Search your competitors URL



Step 2: Click Internal Backlinks

This should then take you to a page that lists out all of your competitors incoming internal links.



Step 3: Check Them Out

At this stage it should show you a few things.

In the left hand column you'll see the number of links, and the referring page (the supporting piece) itself.

Internal Backlinks ⁱ [How to use](#)

Group similar ⁱ

All



Link type ▾

Platform ▾

L

8 groups of similar links

← # of links

Referring page ⁱ

The supporting page

Onpage SEO Checklist: Get More Search Traffic Without Links

www.authorityhacker.com/onpage-seo-checklist/

EN WORDPRESS

On the right hand side, it will then show you the anchor text and the backlink.

Anchor and backlink ⁱ

Our post on [improving site speed for non-technical users](#) is a great place to start, but if you're in

www.authorityhacker.com/speed-up-website/

Of course, you can export all of these as well.

Doing this across multiple pages of a top performing competitor can help you not only find a blueprint for what is working, but also reverse engineer their general strategy once you uncover a pattern.

Equally though, you shouldn't be too reliant on what your competitors are using for anchor text...

UTILIZE AUTHOR SILOS

In the query-based niche site course included in the [optimizers club membership](#), I explained how I've been utilizing author silos for over a year to improve relevance and authorship signals.

It's a really simple trick.

On websites where you publish lots of content in multiple categories you create one author per category.

You can take it further than that if you want and create additional authors for sub-categories.

This then helps to create some of the signals that the algorithm is looking for in 2022. So much is now about expertise and topical relevance.

In certain niches I would say that I've had more success with this method than displaying author biographies on articles themselves. Just make sure that each article links back to the author page in some way and this trick could give you a big boost.

INTERNAL ANCHOR TEXT: THINGS NOT STRINGS

A common mistake people make is thinking of their internal anchor text in the same way that they do with backlinks.

When it comes to building links to your site, we often prefer to use exact match anchor text that is as specific as possible.

However, when it comes to internal links do we need to do that?

Yes and no.

Within the context of our website, we need to optimize our links based on the assumption that bots already know what it's about.

This means our anchor text doesn't need to be as specific.

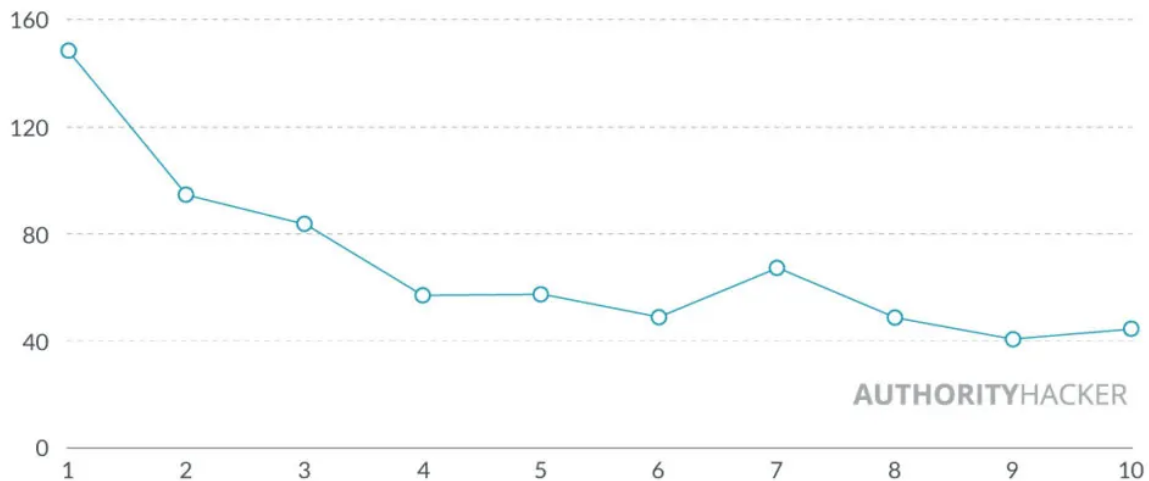
Example: Best Chest Exercises vs Chest Exercises

At this point we're talking about entities, and one type of entity is known as a thing.

This is also known as a **partial match anchor**, and these anchor text types are strongly correlating with better results from internal linking.

Keywords in Anchor Texts: Partial Match

(measured by median, internal backlinks)



Source: <https://www.authorityhacker.com/internal-links/>

People are now talking about “things not strings” more than ever, because using the broad or ‘thing’ reference in your anchor text is what’s working better than it ever did.

Later in the book, you will read about Google’s Natural Language Processing Demo.

This tool is fantastic for helping you optimize your anchor text for the “things not strings” approach.

TIEBACK TECHNIQUE

The tieback technique is a simple content optimization that you can use to continuously identify list items with the main topic of the article. This helps create relevance associations without risking the article becoming ambiguous or unclear to search engines.

Assuming you have a well-optimized opening paragraph that mentions your primary topic or main keyword you should be able to use this.

Bananas are a fruit that is enjoyed all over the world...

So what happens when you mention strawberries? Could you lose relevance to your main topic of bananas? Alright, not the best example. It does illustrate the point though.

Tieback Technique: *Like bananas, strawberries are...*

Another example?

Tieback Technique: *Strawberries are similar to bananas in that...*

The power of the tieback technique is in that you're always making a direct comparison in the first paragraph of the list item. This allows you to continue mentioning your main topic as the article grows, while making those associations between the two items to help the search engines better understand what you're talking about.

There are dozens of little tricks like this that you can utilize, but this is one of my favorites. *Just remember to not use it on every single list item so you don't end up accidentally keyword stuffing your main term/phrase.*

REMOVE UNNECESSARY ADVERBS

Another NLP technique that I've been teaching my students is to remove unnecessary adverbs whenever possible. When I released [The On-Page Collection](#) which includes my NLP course, people kept getting in touch about this technique more than any other.

Which is crazy.

It is so simple to do and it can be quick when you look at it from a different perspective.

Don't do this for each and every article. Do it for every article that needs an update and only do the first few paragraphs.

Use this tool <https://inkforall.com/adverb-checker> to paste in those paragraphs and remove any you can.

The result is that your article becomes more concise, but it reduces the distance between important words, and it will also give a small increase in keyword density to all other important terms. It is these three effects that make it such a powerful technique.

FIND INTERNAL LINKING OPPORTUNITIES BY SEARCHING ON GOOGLE

Ever wonder how some sites do their internal linking so well?

Well, one way is that they use what they've already got, and they do so regularly.

Step 1: Head to Google

Step 2: Search the following

site:domain.com intext:"keyword"

This will then return a list of URLs which contain your keyword.

Note: You can also repeat this with your intended anchor text, instead of your keyword.

INTERLINK FROM YOUR LINK HOTSPOTS

Over time, most big and aged websites will start to naturally reflect power laws.

One such power law, the Pareto Principle or 80/20 rule states that 80% of any outcome is derived from 20% of sources.

When it comes to backlinks, I call these Link Hotspots.

The obvious one is the homepage, but there are always others.

On Ahrefs, head to **Pages > Best By Links**



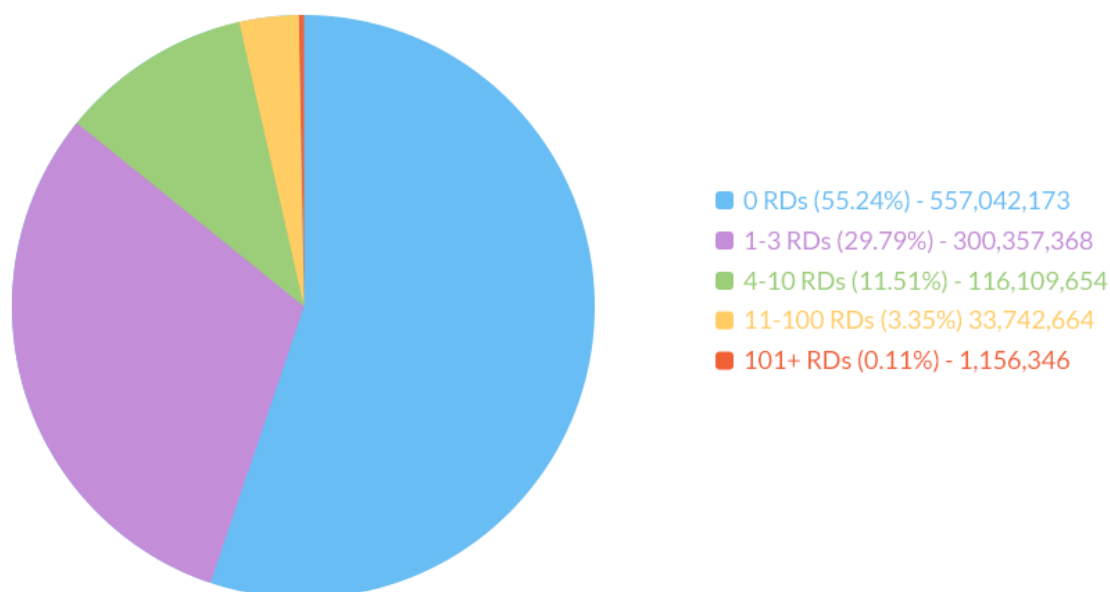
And you should see something like the below

#	Page	UR	Referring domains ↓
1	Wirecutter A New York Times Company thewirecutter.com/	82	4,181
2	301 moved permanently thewirecutter.com/ thewirecutter.com/	79	2,174
3	The Best USB Power Banks for Phones and Tablets for 2019: Reviews by Wirecutter A New York Times Company thewirecutter.com/reviews/best-usb-battery-packs/	49	641

And there is usually more than one non-homepage hotspot.

These pages pass value to other pages in your site at a disproportionate level compared to pages with even ¼ of the amount of links. *Most don't even have that.*

55.24% of pages have zero referring domains pointing to them



(based on a study of ~920 million web pages in Ahrefs' Content Explorer index)

ahrefs

Source: <https://ahrefs.com/blog/search-traffic-study/>

55.24% of pages have zero referring domains pointing to them, which just furthers my point in saying that Link Hotspots are incredibly important pages...

It is incredibly important to not only put in place a strategy that manufactures these pages into existence, but to also utilize the existing ones to their full potential as supporting content.

Step 1: Head to your link hotspot

Step 2: Hit CTRL + F or CMD + F.

Step 3: Search your target keyword or anchor text.

Step 4: Add in the internal link to the target page where there is a good match.

REVERSE RELEVANCE TO MAKE YOUR INTERLINKS & BACKLINKS PASS MORE VALUE

Want to know the easiest way to make your links pass more value?

The answer is simple.

You just need to tap into relevance...

Using the reverse relevance method you can do it in just 3 steps:

1. Keyword In Title
2. Keyword In H1
3. Keyword In URL

All you need to do is make sure your keyword is in those 3 places and you'll start seeing big movements, especially from your link building campaigns.

In my own studies, these three elements correlate with better rankings across the board.

So it was no surprise to me when I started to see improvements from my links when I implemented reverse relevance.

USE YOUTUBE FOR SUPPORTING CONTENT IDEAS

This tip is particularly good for creating pieces of supporting content that with a little promotion, can potentially land you a lot of links.

The benefit of this is that you can then power up other pieces of related content with a supporting piece that has some serious 'juice'.

When finding videos with a lot of views, it can be a good sign that the topic is a hot one.

Here's how to use this method:

Step 1: Head To YouTube

Step 2: Search Your Keywords

Step 3: Check The Views

Repeat this process to create a big seed list of ideas to then do further research and analysis on to know which to target first.

It's that simple.

FIND POWERFUL SUPPORTING CONTENT IDEAS WITH GSC

Want to find out EXACTLY what Google believes your existing content is relevant to?

Of course you do, we all do!

While search console can be useful for gathering content update ideas, I want to focus on showing you how you can use this for identifying powerful supporting content ideas.

Internal links can be very powerful and adding more & better quality internal links is one of the easiest ways to improve your rankings...

Aside from not having enough in the first place, the main reason why people aren't getting better rankings from their internal linking is this...

Their supporting content sucks.

However, there are a few rock-solid ways to do this...

Step 1: Go to Google Search Console.

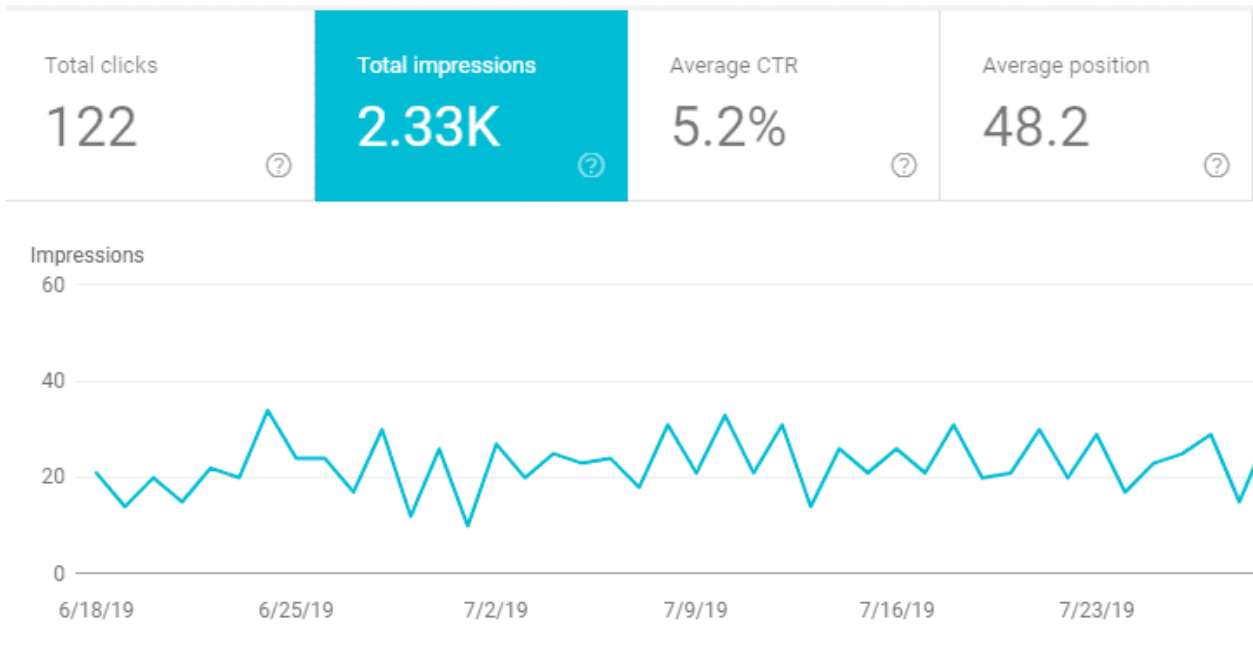
You need to have an account with Google Search Console and already have at least 30 days worth of data for this tutorial to be useful.

Step 2: Filtering The View

Click on 'Performance'.

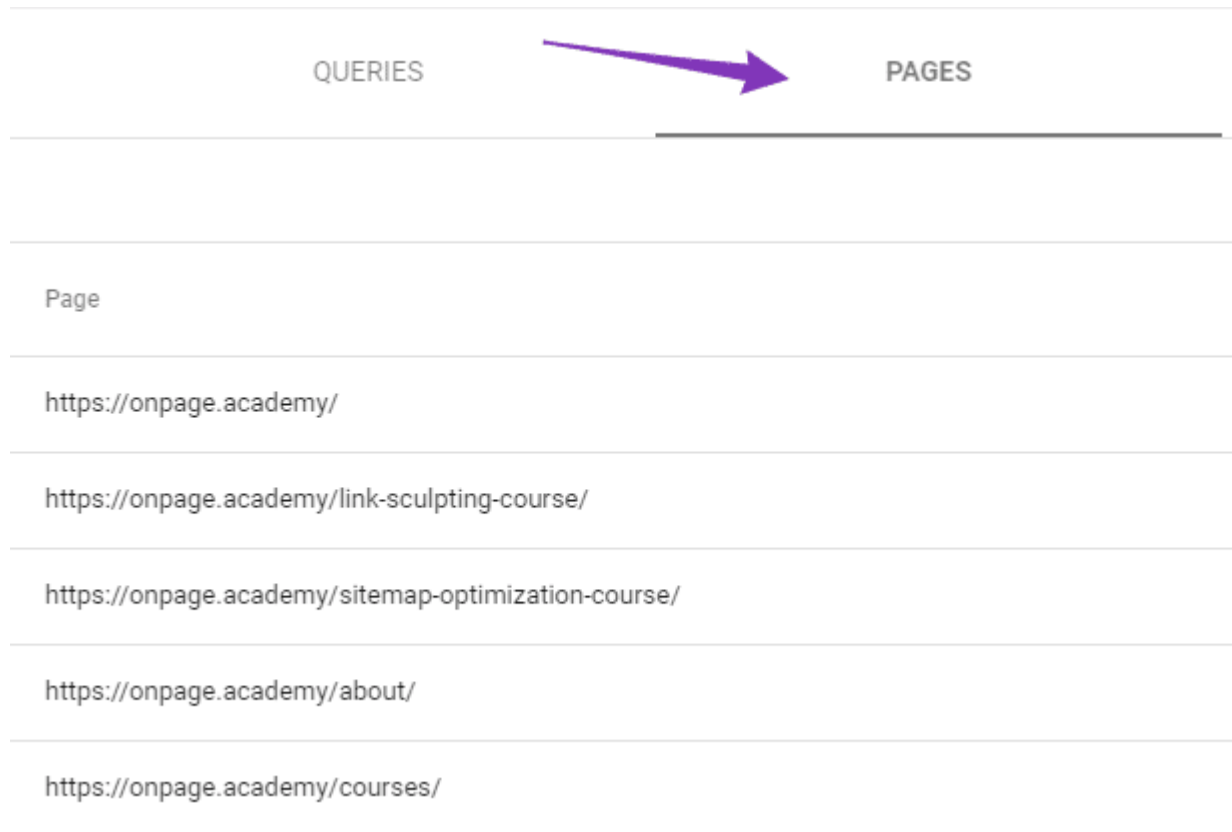
Click on 'Impressions'.

And now click to deselect 'total clicks'.



Now you need to scroll down a bit, and Click 'Pages'. Unselecting Queries in the process.

Step 3: Selecting Your Page



The next step is to select the money page or cornerstone content piece you'd like to get supporting content ideas for.

Simply Click the URL of the page you want more details for.

Step 4: Re-Adjust The View



Now that we've selected our page, we want to re-adjust the view back to 'Queries'.

From here you can either manually analyze the opportunities, or if there is a lot it might be a good idea to use the export feature.

SEARCH APPEARANCE



TWO EASY WAYS TO FIND KEYWORDS FOR ANY NICHE

So you've got loads of ideas for supporting content, but not all of them will have significant search volume.

You want to bring more people into your funnel with supporting content, so what can you do?

Easy.

Take these two off-the-wall methods and repeat them ad infinitum...

1. Grab Q&A Keywords From Quora

Quora is a giant.

It ranks for over 62 million keywords, and that's after almost a solid year of heavy losses...

This makes it ideal for reverse engineering keywords for just about any niche.

Step 1: Stick Quora.com in Ahrefs (or other)

Just search the Quora root domain in Ahrefs, SEMRush, etc.

Step 2: Click 'Organic keywords'

Now filter your view, by selecting the Organic keyword section (Ahrefs).

Step 3: Filter by KEYWORD

 × Any ▼

Step 4: More filters & export

Now all you need to do is apply some more filters and export that list.

Keyword		Volume ⁱ
clock puns	4	800
time puns	3	1,900
when were clocks invented	5	1,700

Super easy.

2. Steal Keywords From Forums

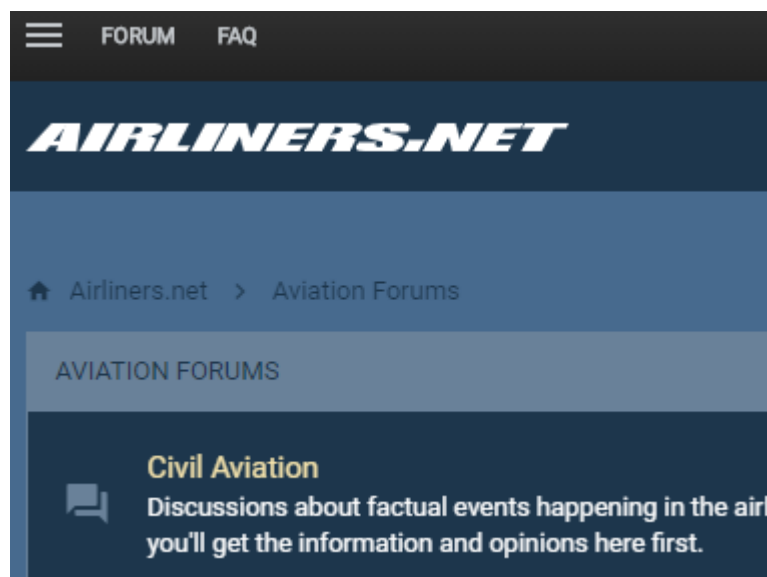
Forums aren't as popular as they once were, but there are still some huge ones out there.

The ones that still exist tend to be pretty big.

Mark that another target for reverse engineering!

Step 1: Find a forum.

The easiest way to find the big forums is by using the website <https://www.findaforum.net/>



Step 2: Add the forum to Ahrefs or similar.

Just add it to your favorite reverse engineering tool.

Step 3: Click 'Organic keywords'

The same as we did before, just repeat this step.

Step 4: Filter by keyword.

I'm going to use the head term 'Boeing' for our example.

 ✕ Any ▾

Step 5: More filters & export

boeing 737 800 vs 737 900	6	30
boeing 717 price	6	30
airbus a319 vs boeing 737	4	90
boeing 737 landing speed mph	5	30

These keywords have significantly less volume, but are also absolute keyword gold in terms of targeting them as they are all likely to be relatively easy to rank for.

UNSTICK YOUR RANKINGS WITH HYPER-RELEVANT TOPICALITY OPTIMIZATION

Have you ever had articles or product get stick on the second page, and no matter what you do it won't budge?

You've added links, adjusted the content, added more internal links, and much more?

Yeah, what's up with that?

Well, quite often your missing the mark on **topical optimization**.

There are two scenarios:

1. **Some section/s of your site are pulling away topical relevance.**

In this case you want to actually UNLINK some of your articles that aren't related enough.

I know it sounds counter-intuitive, but it works.

Organic keywords i 1,420



In the image above, I ran a test.

- I took a site that wasn't ranking.
- I removed a silo from the site.
- I added that silo to a new domain.
- I redirected the old silo URLs to the new sites URLs.

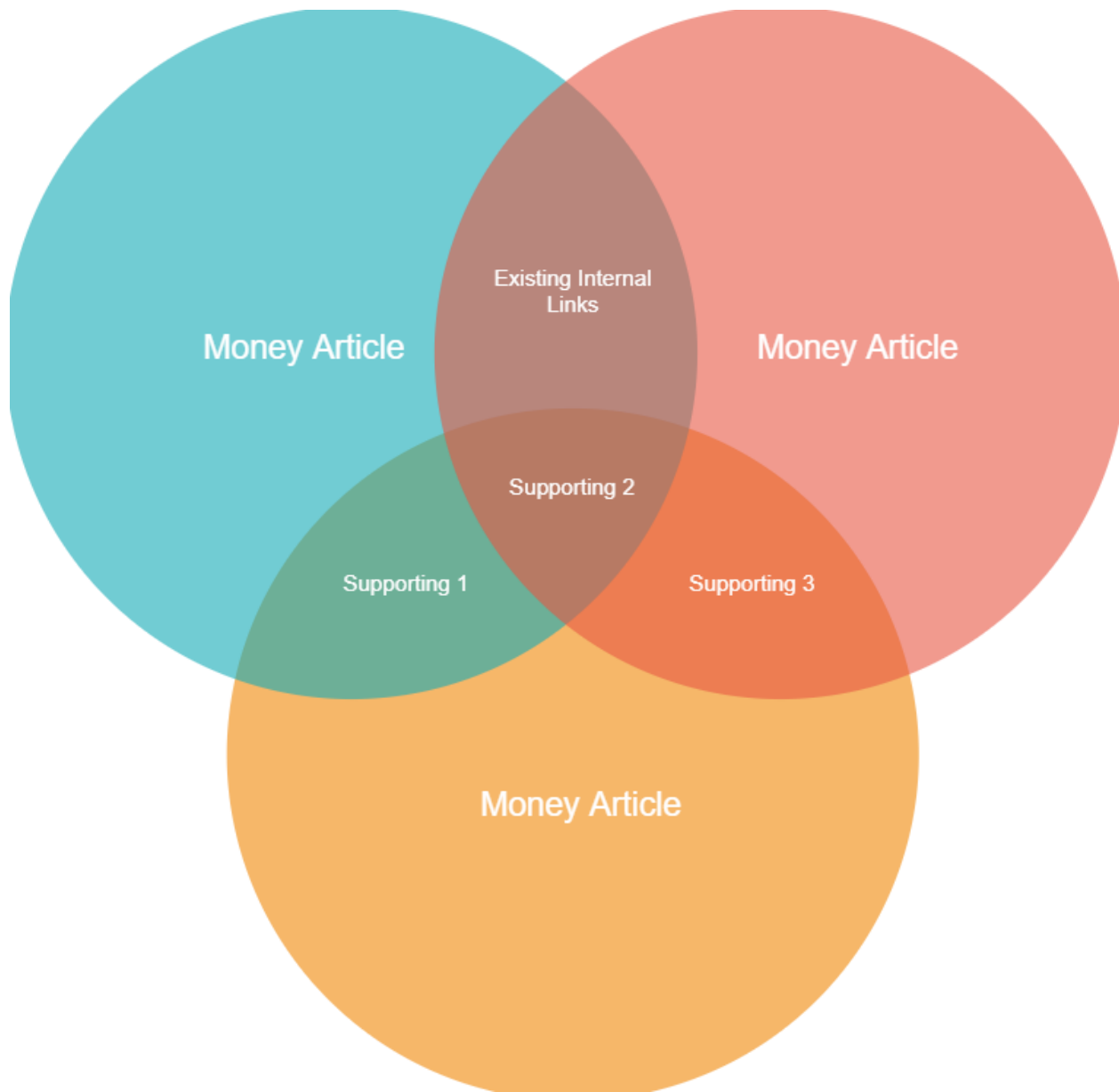
You can see that this site shot to life quite suddenly.

Sometimes what you don't say is just as important as what you do say... This is exactly why niche sites work so well, and why when building authority sites you need **AUTHORITY**.

2. Not enough topically focused supporting content.

Just because we think our content is relevant enough doesn't mean Google does.

You might need different supporting content in order to get your rankings unstuck.

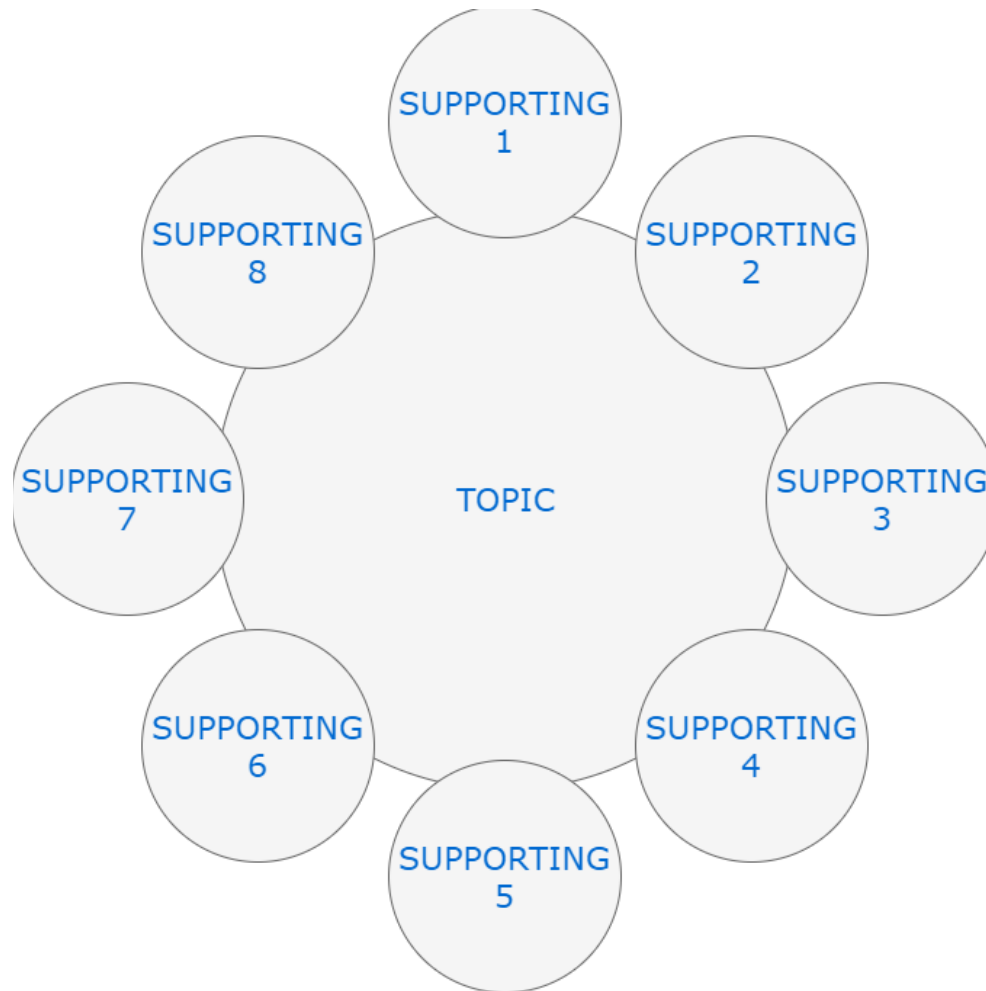


In the above venn diagram you can see exactly how I do this for my sites.

- I remove non related internal links.
- A portion of the originals remain.
- I then add three new supporting pieces that link to as many as 3 money articles.
- I wait 30 days to see the results max.

Usually the result is that the target articles get “unstuck”.

You want to get to the point where you’re creating entire hubs of content.



Where most of the content is supporting a singular topic, and within that topic you might have a number of “money articles”.

It's far better to look at this from the perspective of supporting the topic than supporting the money posts.

MOVE YOUR SCHEMA ACROSS WHEN USING PAGES INSTEAD OF POSTS

Want to know one mistake that pretty much every single person I know has made?

Using pages instead of posts - without moving across the schema.

The reason why this matters is obvious, you want to use the correct schema markup for your content.

The reason why people don't always catch this though isn't so obvious.

Pages and Posts (on WordPress) use different templates.

This means that when people build themes, they assume that you'll only be using posts for content.

So the Schema that is used is totally different.

The Structured Data Tool

You can use the Schema Validator to find out what Schema is being used on your Posts but not Pages and vice versa.

<https://validator.schema.org/>

SCHEMA MARKUPS YOU NEED TO USE

In the same way that theme authors might not know how you intend to use your site, it's also the case that they don't always know what the best schema to use for SEO is.

Or the best way to use it. So a lot of stuff gets missed.

Markup You Should Implement Wherever/Whenever Possible:

- [Table Markup](#)
- [ItemList Markup](#)
- [Speakable Markup](#)
- [FAQ Markup](#)
- [Q&A Markup](#)
- [HowTo Markup](#)
- [Author Markup](#)
- [sameAs Markup](#)

Showing you how to implement them all is far beyond the scope of this book, however, these are the standout pieces of Schema that I think every site should have as standard for certain content types or even sitewide in some cases.

BECOME THE SCHEMA PACMAN (STEALING COMPETITORS SCHEMA)

This tip comes straight from one of my email series.

It's been by far one of my most popular emails to date.

Why?

Because I showed people that Schema is in fact a ranking factor by citing a [case-study](#).

And then I gave people a solution for how to use it.

It's been the entire premise of most of the tips in this book.

So here's how -

Step 1: Pick 3-5 Top Competitors.

You don't need to worry about how broad or niche you go here...

Just pick 3-5 competitors that are ranking extremely well.

Step 2: Identify 2-3 Templates

A template is a "common theme" that is used to dictate how a page should be displayed.

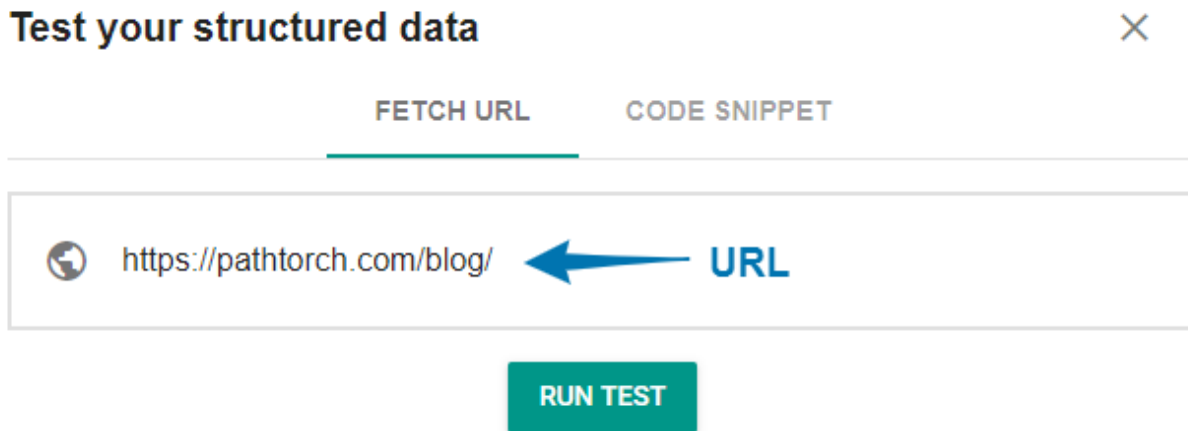
Examples are -

- Posts
- Category Pages
- Products

If your competitor is mainly an informational site, you might want to identify different types of posts.

Make a list of 1 URL for each template/type of each competitor.

Step 3: Test The Structured Data



Head to Google's **Structured Data Testing Tool**.

>> <https://search.google.com/structured-data/testing-tool/u/0/>

Now start adding your URLs that you previously collected (one at a time unfortunately).

'Run Test'...

Step 4: Check Their Schema, Take What You Like =]

Detected		0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	5 ITEMS
Knowledge Bomb				
CollectionPage		0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM
Organization		0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM
WPHeader		0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM
Article		0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM
SiteNavigationElement		0 ERRORS	0 WARNINGS	1 ITEM

You should now get a nice list of every type of Structured Data being used on the page.

In my example, you can see that we've got an Article type being returned on a /blog/ as well as the article itself.

This is a knowledge bomb that I discovered using this method and have since been using on my sites.

Obviously use common sense as some sites are using redundant schema (a big no-no), and yes you'll have to take the code they are using and adapt it for your site!

USE FLATTER SITE STRUCTURES AT THE TOP

Today, there are more websites than ever.

Because of this, crawling becomes increasingly computationally expensive over time.

We SEOs have seen the results...

Sites that are more crawl-friendly have a significant advantage.

The best way to make your site friendly to crawlers such as Googlebot is reduce the crawl depth of your site, also known as click depth.

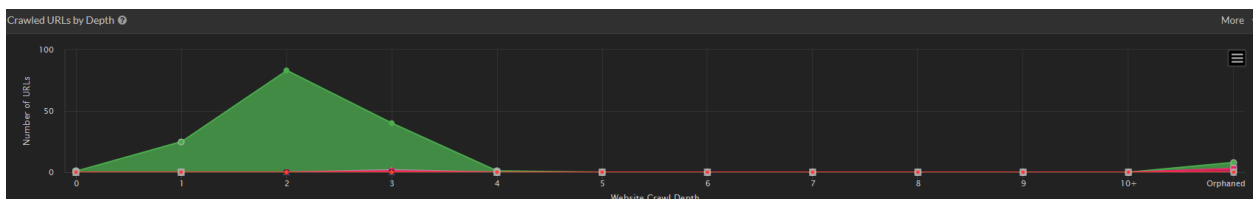
Crawl Depth Intensity

The intensity of your URLs click depth is one such consideration.

Do the majority of your URLs sit at Crawl Depth 1, 2, 3, or possibly higher?

Reducing this, by moving the majority of your URLs to a “lower” crawl depth is one way you can improve your sites crawlability.

Crawl Depth Extensity



The extensity is totally different, this is how deep your structure spans in total, or the range.

So when you’re optimizing crawl depth, never forget to optimize the extensity as well.

USE NUMBERED PAGINATION WITH ‘JUMP POINTS’

Ever wondered if all pagination setups are equal?

The answer *is no*.

When it comes to SEO, you always need to take crawl factors into consideration.

A simple next/prev style pagination system isn't nearly as friendly as one that does the below:

1, 2, 3, 4 .. 8 .. 16

This is also more friendly than a system that follows a chronological order of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.

Why?

Because this use of 'jump points' makes sure that archived content, 16 pages in, isn't extremely difficult to access for crawlers.

This simple change, especially on big sites, will often result in much improved rankings.

COMBAT DECREASING CTR_s WITH MAGNETIC TITLES

Organic click-through-rate is at an all time low.

But what can you do?

Easy.

Stand out in the crowd with magnetic titles.

What is a magnetic title?

A magnetic title is something that draws the person in.

It plays on both emotional triggers, without being too “clickbaity”.

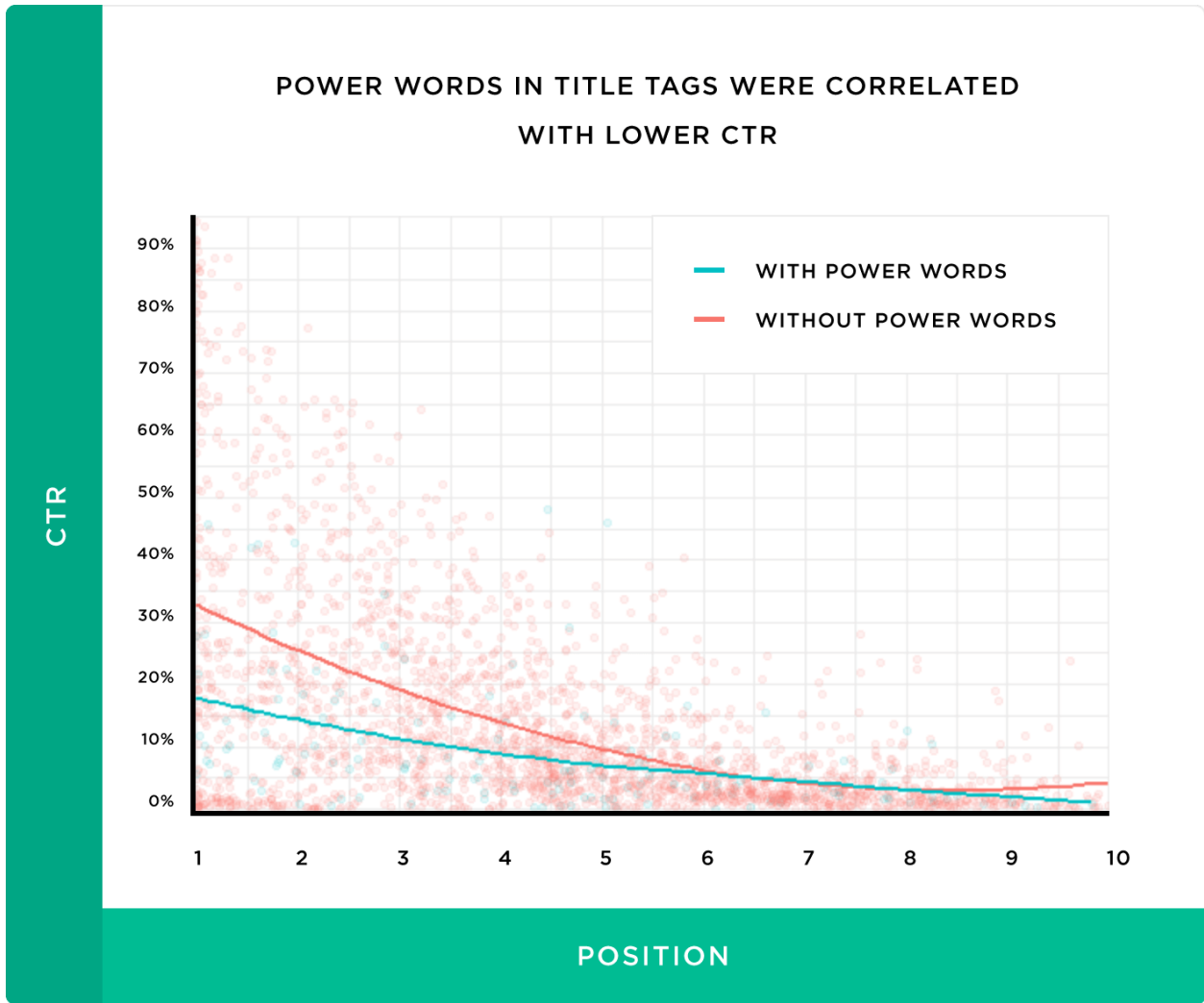
Brian Dean at Backlinko [conducted a study](#) on this very thing.

He found that results with emotional titles correlated with better rankings and click-through rates, there is an inverse relationship there, but check it out nonetheless:



Source: <https://backlinko.com/seo-this-year#combat-decreasing-ctrs>

Titles which contained more power words, the words that are typically more associated with clickbait, did far worse.



Source: <https://backlinko.com/seo-this-year#combat-decreasing-ctrs>

Headline Templates For Magnetic Titles

Headline template:

Why I'll Never <Strong feeling> <Something> Ever Again

Headline: Why I'll Never F***** Design Ever Again

Why it works:

- Strong stance
- F***** conveys anger
- Makes us wonder why

Headline template:

The Science of "<some cliché>"

Headline: The Science of "The Law Of Attraction"

Why it works:

- Offers explanations (people crave resolution)
- Implies the author is trustworthy
- Creates curiosity

Headline template:

How <Something unexpected leads to> <An unexpected result>

Headline: How Anti-Fungal Shampoo Cured My Acne

Why it works:

- Offers a solution
- Surprising combination
- Curiosity

Remember, these templates are just examples.

It's important that you construct your headlines with psychology in mind for best results.

If you ever find yourself completely lost for ideas, then I recommend something like

[CoSchedule's Headline Analyzer](#).

USE SERP ADS TO IMPROVE YOUR CTR'S

This is a tip that I picked up some time ago, and over the last few years it's become relatively well known thanks to publishers talking about it such as Backlinko and more.

But it still doesn't get enough attention...

Basically, in Google Ads you're bidding on keywords and based on many factors, including your CTR you'll get a better discount on your clicks and a better chance for your ad to continue being shown.

With me so far?

Ok, so when you see these ads on Google you're basically seeing ads that have been super optimized for what?

Clicks.

So the opportunity for you or I as an SEO, is that we can benefit from their hard work in order to get better CTR %s on our own sites.

Here's how to do it:

Step 1: Search your keyword on Google.

Step 2: Now check out the ad results.

Step 3: Look for repeating words (CTRL/CMD + F in Chrome).

Step 4: Sprinkle them into your title and description tags.

And sometimes you'll see an improvement in your CTR %s on Google Search Console, and subsequently more traffic in your Analytics.

Note: You can always add in an extra step and start split-testing titles, but that's for another day.

CUT THROUGH THE COMPETITION WITH CONCISE CONTENT

Some people in our industry still believe that Google can't read our content.

Erm?

I invite anyone with this belief to look at the Google NLP tool mentioned in this ebook.

But this belief has come from somewhere.

It mostly comes from the fact that you can 80/20 your way to victory, so people assume the rest of the content doesn't matter or simply gets ignored.

It's not the case, it's just that some things matter a lot more than others (see power factors later in the ebook).

It's also been my universal experience that you can also completely overwhelm Google.

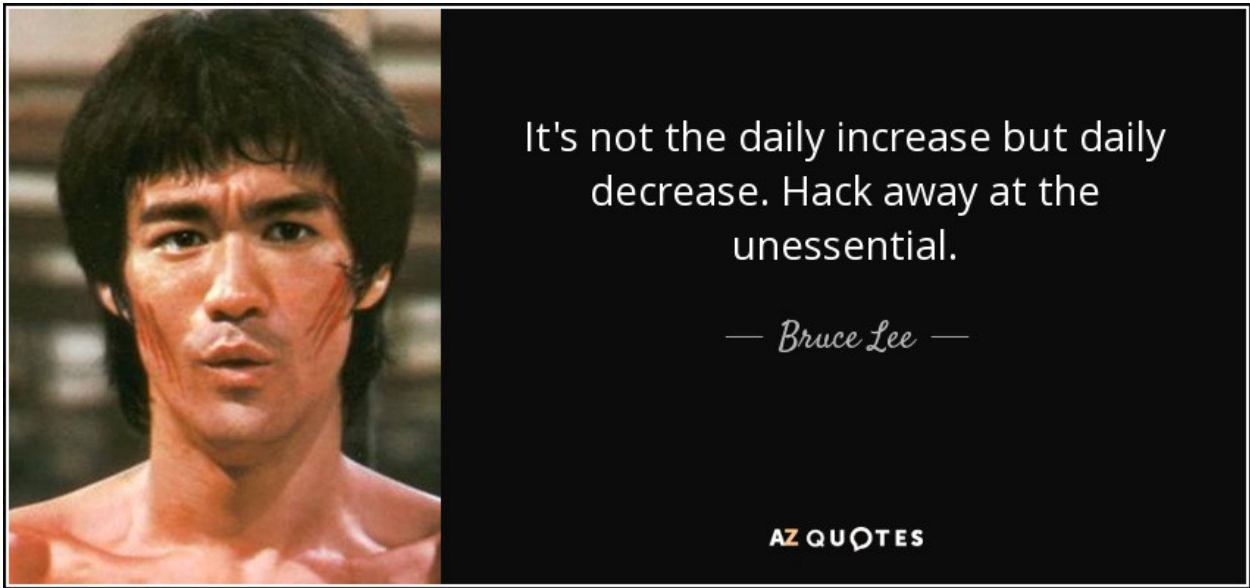
This is why concise content is killin' it.

Concise Content

Concise content can be either long-form or short-form content.

This is why people feel passionately for one or the other, but it's just that both work when done right.

Well organized content that is well optimized is what I call concise.

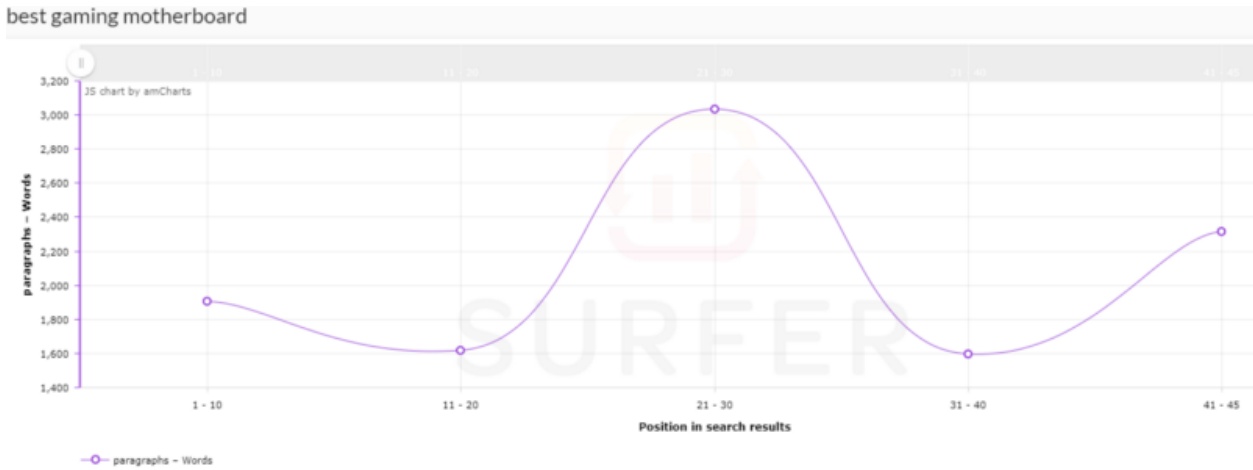


Content with too much or too little information isn't going to rank as well.

If you find yourself trying to hit a specific word count, it's safe to say your writer might unnecessarily conflate separate ideas into the article to hit that number.

Incidentally, this is how cannibalization happens.

Even from my own data studies, it's not always the bigger articles that rank best:



How To Write Just Enough With This One Change

I don't want to talk about tools like Surfer SEO at this stage, just because that's covered elsewhere in the book...

But what I can say is that [Dynalist](#) made my life so much better as someone who creates content, and it also made life easier for my writers as well.

Before we write any article, we make sure to map out each section. Much like a book.

This allows us to know exactly what we're going to write about before we start.

It helps keep things concise.

Obviously research is required, but as always the devil is in the details.

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail!

EXACT ORDER VS EXACT MATCH

You've heard of exact match keywords.

Did you know though, that most people consider that having the keywords anywhere in a phrase means exact match?

It doesn't though.

So I've found it better to say 'exact order'.

When I conducted a study earlier this year, I found that 61.25% of all ranking sites had the keyword displayed in the exact order it was searched in the page title.

Sites with those words in the title, but not in the exact order didn't rank nearly as well.

Exact Order actually outperformed 'Exact Match' in 77% of cases in all of the top 20 results I checked.

This is clearly not groundbreaking news, but nonetheless, the data is telling us that it's a mistake to be avoided at all costs.

RAP ANALYSIS FOR REALISTIC KEYWORD DIFFICULTY

Are you sick of doing your keyword research perfectly only to find that your content doesn't rank for what was supposed to be a sure thing?

I too was in this situation, until 2018 when I decided to test out all the different methods.

What worked best?

RAP Analysis.

This stands for Relevancy, Authority, Popularity.

Relevancy -

The objective here is to quickly analyze the relevance of your competition.

High relevance can be ok, assuming that you have higher authority.

However in some cases the opposite holds true. If there are a lack of relevant results present, you can sometimes sneak in to a SERP with more authoritative domains.

To quickly analyze the relevance of the results in the top 10, I have a basic 3 point system that works incredibly well when paired with Authority & Popularity.

Check the results for the presence of the keyword in three places.

1. Title
2. Headline or <h1>
3. URL

If all three are present, you score that site with a 3/3, and as there are usually 10 regular organic results in most SERPs, you give that SERP a score from 0-30.



An industry poll performed by SparkToro in August, '19 clearly shows that in SEO today, the majority of people believe that the 'Relevance of overall page content' is king.

Authority -

This one is a little more tricky, as I personally find that Ahrefs' Domain Rating or DR is very accurate and correlates well with rankings.

Not everyone uses Ahrefs though, but nonetheless, authority is one thing you will want to check with whichever tool you use.

Popularity -

While authority might deal with the number of referring domains that a site has in total, popularity is more of a granular check, at the page level.

Again, I like to check this with Ahrefs.

SERP overview for "best alarm clock"

Image pack Top stories People also ask Featured snippet Site links Thumbnails

Search result	AR	DR	UR	Backlinks	Domains
1 ▶ Featured snippet					
2 ▶ People also ask					
3 The best alarm clocks of 2019 - CNET https://www.cnet.com/news/the-best-alarm-clocks-of-2019/ ▼	307	91	29	1,027	47
4 14 Best Alarm Clocks In 2019 [Buying Guide] – Gear Hungry https://www.gearhungry.com/best-alarm-clock/ ▼ ▶ 3 Site links	141K	65	24	48	30
5 14 Best Alarm Clocks on Amazon, Reviewed: 2019 http://nymag.com/strategist/article/best-alarm-clocks-reviewed.html ▼	1.3K	90	24	28	23

I ignore their UR metric, which is their version of a ‘popularity’ metric and instead opt for raw domain data.

The number of links a page has in total, and the average number of domains the top 10 of that SERP has.

What next?

Once you’ve checked all of these factors, and compared them to what your domain has to offer or what you think a campaign you run can achieve, you have one more thing to do...

See if you think you can win in one or more of the RAP areas.

Scenarios where you can win:

- A SERP with mid-high “authority” but low “popularity”
- A SERP with high authority, low relevance and low popularity.
- A SERP with high relevance, low popularity

Well, you get the idea.

You’re looking for gaps that you can utilize to your advantage.

This is real keyword difficulty research, it's what works best, and while a lot of it is manual there's a rare task that can't be automated or delegated.

GROUP CLICK DATA FOR KEYWORD RESEARCH, NOT JUST SEARCH VOLUME











A fundamental technique people use when planning out their content strategy, is taking a group of keywords that they want to target, and then grouping those keywords together to see the combined search volume.

This helps figure out traffic potential, and alongside other considerations such as keyword difficulty, helps you ascertain whether or not it's worth doing the content in the first place.

The problem is that search volume - even when you apply CTR estimates is way off the pace in terms of traffic.

Some SERPs today are virtually zero click SERPs, regardless of the search volume or average industry click-through-rates for position 1.

Thankfully you can use click data from Ahrefs to see how much traffic a group of keywords is actually likely to bring you.

<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword	KD	Volume ▼	Clicks
<input type="checkbox"/> + best alarm clock	38	12K 	16,798 
<input type="checkbox"/> + best alarm clock app	22	3.3K 	1,791 
<input type="checkbox"/> + best alarm clock for heavy sleepers	6	1.7K 	1,897 
<input type="checkbox"/> + best sunrise alarm clock	22	1.6K 	2,821 
<input type="checkbox"/> + best android alarm clock	21	1.3K 	999 

I feel like this is one of those important things that I can put in this book about keyword research alongside the RAP Analysis Method.

Note: *I'm certainly not the first to talk about this, but the fact is we need to keep repeating it until it becomes an industry standard operating procedure.*

BAIT AND SWITCH TECHNIQUE FOR AFFILIATES EXPLAINED

Many people ignore certain keywords due to a lack of affiliate programs and simple monetization options.

Even if you aren't using display ads, these keywords can be used to funnel people to your intended product.

Here's how you do it:

Step 1: Find products without affiliate programs or monetization opportunities

Step 2: Perform keyword research, including difficulty

Step 3: Write the content

Now you will write the product review as you normally would, but instead of placing a CTA (Call To Action) to buy the product...

You instead switch the narrative, and basically say;

"We prefer this product instead, read the review here".

This is an incredibly powerful technique that allows you to build traffic quickly, build trust by not immediately going for the sale and become your affiliate managers favorite person.

ENTITY HACKING FOR BETTER RANKINGS

As you can tell, as an affiliate I'm massively invested in individual reviews.

One of the big wins for me has been what my team and I call "entity hacking", and we've noticed considerably better rankings since doing it.

Now, I won't bore you unnecessarily with the technical theory of why this works, **but I will tell you exactly how to do it.**

1. Note the full name of the product as it is displayed on the manufacturers website.
2. Add this into your article, either as a heading or beneath a heading.
3. Add more entity based details into the Schema.

itemReviewed	
@type	Product
name	The Ordinary Niacinamide 10% + Zinc 1%
image	https://theordinary.com/images/products/rdn-niacinamide-10pct-zinc-1pct-30ml.png
brand	
@type	Thing
name	The Ordinary

The third one is kind of critical... Above is an example where I setup the Schema for entity hacking.

- The product name as displayed on the brands website
- The actual URL of the image the brand uses

-
- Then I use the brand schema to declare the brand of item, rather than the name of my own website (as many people mistakenly do).

In the last couple of tips I shared with you the two strategies I use for my individual reviews, but without entity hacking I wouldn't rank nearly as well as I do.

Always, always, always use common threads to establish relevance between you and the product, product brand, etc.

LET GOOGLE DECIDE

AI has continuously become a more important and ever-present part of how search works. Using machine learning has allowed search engines such as Google to be able to go out there and learn a lot about what makes a good page and what doesn't.

Never forget that what a search engine wants from you is data.

So when I started allowing the bots into all the pages on my site and when I stopped telling them whether they could or couldn't index pages I was a little surprised by the results.

Pages I had learned weren't valuable to search engines were considered valuable enough to index. Not only this, but the entire site's rankings improved bringing in more search impressions and organic traffic.

We're moving into an era when machine learning means that we don't need to be the strict parents of our websites that we used to be. It's a good thing.

So start letting them decide what they want and they'll thank you for it.

COMPOUND SIGNALS BY KEEPING URLs THE SAME

If you've been in SEO for some time, you will know the following two things to be true.

1. Importance of URLs has decreased
2. Compounded authority and signals has increased

Because of this, one tactic that has been useful in certain niches is sacrificing the exact match URL in favor of the compounded URL.

What does this mean?

In the gaming industry, gaming fans regularly see games announced at an event called E3.

This usually includes a trailer, some gameplay and a few details about the game. Including the launch date. Gaming websites will cover these announcements, and later when the game is released they will then review the game.

One tactic these sites could use is the compounded URL...

The title and headline might initially read "God of War Announcement & Release Date".

With the URL /god-of-war/ - to keep it broad for repurposing later.

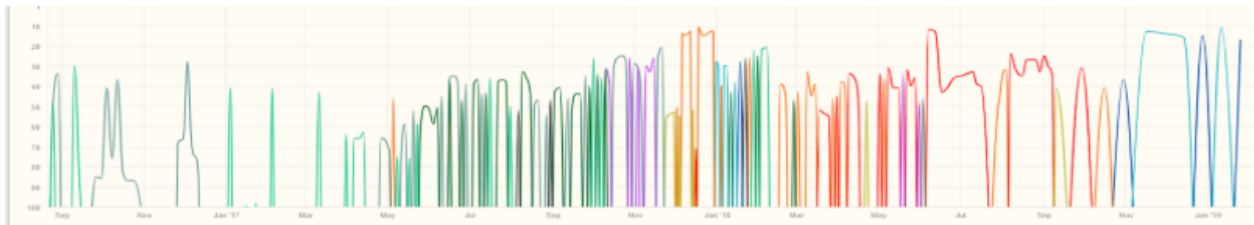
At this later point, the title and headline can be changed. Along with the metadata, and schema for the date.

You then have a page with a considerable advantage over your competitors from the day of the products launch.

This works in many industries, and often works better than simply consolidating the old URL into a new one.

Speaking of...

CONSOLIDATE CONTENT THE RIGHT WAY



Ever suffered from cannibalization? Have you ever done some content pruning?

If you've read any of my content before you might have seen my articles about these two topics. (So I won't repeat them in the book).

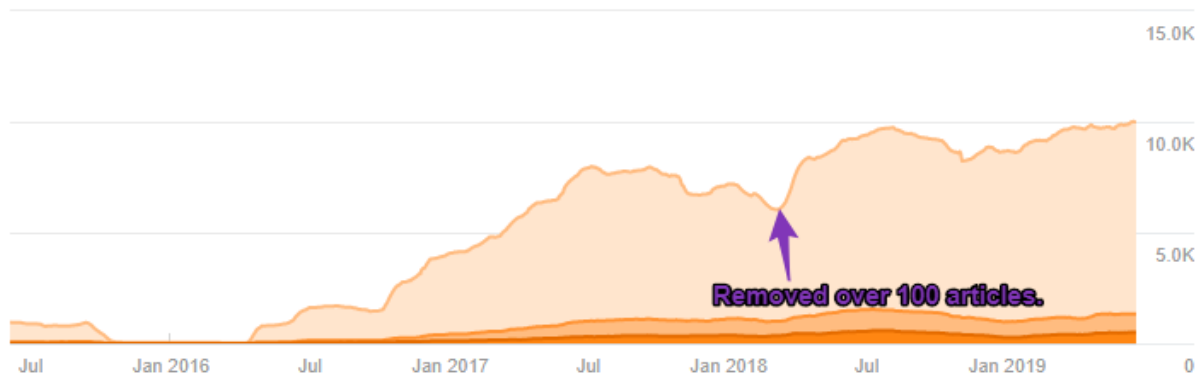
One thing I didn't talk about was how to consolidate the content the right way.

Why consolidate?

First of all, you'll receive [more traffic](#) from one higher ranking piece of content than two lower ranking ones.

Consolidating content, especially cannibalized content, often results in ranking improvements.

Organic keywords i 10,006



If you've decided to prune content, it's also often better to take parts of one article or multiple articles and put them into a new one or an already existing piece.

You do this by placing a .301 redirect between two pieces of content.

Post A > Post B

Post C > Post B

And so on!

When to consolidate?

One of the hardest things about cannibalization and content pruning is knowing when to consolidate, what parts to consolidate and so on.

It can be easy to remove articles that are part of a funnel.

If your content is an important piece of content for funnel reasons, obviously it makes no sense to consolidate it.

The same can be said for content that is present as supporting content, either directly via internal links or as part of providing enough information to satisfy topical classification, relevance, etc.

This makes it incredibly difficult to know when to consolidate.

If in doubt, don't consolidate.

If it's not a definite yes, it's a no...

You can exhaust plenty of other options first; you can get a second pair of eyes to help you figure out if the content is important for other reasons, you can set the content to NoIndex instead of removing and redirecting, etc.

Everyone out there knows about the power of these methods, and as such want a guaranteed-success approach to do it.

There isn't one as no two websites are exactly the same.

So for me the best piece of advice I can give on the subject is to proceed with caution.

You can also check out my article about cannibalization [here](#), and my one about pruning [here](#). This will at least give you a framework for the more obvious pieces that are a definite yes.

UPDATE YOUR REDIRECTS

There are many situations where an old piece of content or a product will be removed from your site.

And it's common to setup redirects from the URL that is no longer there, to a new one or already existing one.

But leaving it there is a mistake people make too often...

In fact, [85.71% of crawls](#) report redirected URLs.

This is a big problem.

It's common knowledge that redirects dilute the power of links, not just inbound links or "backlinks" either.

Those internal links that would otherwise be passing full value, if you simply updated them, are now having to perform what is known as a "hop".

It's this hop that costs sites big, with the loss of link value and equally bots don't like it. It's not crawl friendly, and if an overall site quality score does exist this is also going to mark you down for that reason.

Of course you should still use the redirects, just make sure to update the initial link sources.

USE REDIRECTS CORRECTLY

While you should always update your redirects, this doesn't mean you shouldn't set the redirects up.

Google often tries to crawl URLs that are no longer there.

So we don't want to waste crawl equity.

But when you set up your redirects, do so strategically.

A lot of people just redirect to the homepage, which is missing a lot of opportunities.

Treat your redirects like internal links.

Redirect to the page that is most relevant!

Sometimes this is an article, a product or even a category.

Which brings me to another common missed opportunity...

CONTEXTUALLY LINK TO CATEGORY PAGES

Even if you're not trying to rank a page, you should still be pointing contextual links to them.

Especially categories.


These pages act as information hubs, and as such the more you can link to them, the stronger they become and the more relevance they will pass back down to the posts/products that are categorized there.

Many sites today forget to link to their category pages despite it being a common practice not even half a decade ago.

Use the same search operator as I mentioned earlier with a twist;

site:domain.com intext:"category"

You should be able to find dozens of good internal linking opportunities for your categories.

	1 Day	7 Days	30 Days	Life	MS
19	▲ 81	▲ 60	-	▲ 60	880
26	▲ 74	▲ 74	-	▲ 74	140
31	▲ 69	▲ 69	-	▲ 69	880
18	▲ 45	▲ 52	-	▲ 52	140
27	▲ 12	▲ 8	-	▲ 8	110

And it personally helped me give life to articles that were previously not ranking at all.








Powering up your categories with more link equity and relevance can make a big difference, so don't miss the opportunity to utilize them correctly.

COMPRESS + CONVERT IMAGES

Do you know what the biggest files on your web pages are?

Images.

Content size by content type

CONTENT TYPE	PERCENT	SIZE
 Image	79.16%	5.1 MB
 Script	9.74%	624.1 KB
 Font	6.02%	385.5 KB
 CSS	4.40%	281.7 KB
 HTML	0.64%	40.7 KB
 XHR	0.02%	1.6 KB
 Redirect	0.02%	1.2 KB
Total	100.00%	6.4 MB

You've heard about CDNs (Content Delivery Networks), Lazy Loading, and Compression.

You might also have heard of formats such as WebP.

Which are smaller than JPEG and PNG files.

Two Myths, Two Solutions

There are a couple of myths about this format.

Myth #1

First of all, you'll probably have heard that it isn't compatible with certain browsers.

That's not true.

Safari which is increasingly used less and less, does not natively support the format.

So there is a redundancy known as a fallback that is used by developers, to make sure that Safari users see the JPEG or PNG file instead.

This is done based on browser detection, so you're not loading both images, just the one that is specified by the browser.

So there is no good reason to not use this format.

Myth #2

The second myth is that formats like WebP are just all round better, but it's not the case.

In 2019, [I conducted a study](#) which found that compressed JPEG files are actually smaller than non-compressed WebP files.

But if you first compress the image, then convert it to WebP you could in fact decrease the original size of that file by 92.07%.

Bottom-line -

One of the best things you can do to improve the loading time of your pages, is actually focus on your images.

If you can move beyond the myths then you'll be in a good position to make massive gains by doing just that.

REMOVE UNUSED CSS FOR BETTER LOADING TIMES

Another big performance upgrade you can do is remove unused CSS from your stylesheets.

Using sites such as <https://purifycss.online/> you can see what isn't being used.

Remember though, you should ALWAYS backup your site prior to making any changes.

AND, CSS that isn't being used on one page, might be being used on others.

For this reason, you need to do this at a template level.

- Page
- Post
- Author Page
- Custom Post Types

Once you've gone through all of the templates on your site, you should still be able to reduce the size of your stylesheets by around 50% if your site uses any of the popular CSS frameworks.

Note: Be extremely careful removing media queries. When in doubt, you can always hire a good developer to do this for you on Upwork which should cost at max \$100 to do for your whole site.

NOFOLLOW YOUR AFFILIATE LINKS

In early 2019, I had a friend come to me for help with their site which simply wouldn't take off despite good content and links.

Being someone who has audited hundreds of sites, I said I would take a look.

I noticed a problem right away.

The site had thousands of affiliate links, that were not set to 'NoFollow'.

And they were all redirecting, as the affiliate network had changed the links final destination.

This created the perfect storm...

Basically the site wasn't getting crawled as well as it should be, therefore not indexing as well as it should be.

Internal links weren't getting all the juice they could and the problem with the redirects was also giving Google a reason to question the site as to whether it was trustworthy or not.

After fixing the issue:

Organic keywords ⁱ 2,718



The point here is that, for many reasons it should be standard practice to NoFollow your affiliate links, especially as you can't control the destination URL.

I love this tip because it is also a poignant example of the growing importance of Technical SEO.

ALLOW YOUR FILES TO BE CRAWLED

Have you heard mixed things about how to handle bot rules for resource files?

The answer to that is probably a yes.

Because of this many webmasters decide to block crawler access to things like CSS files, JS files and other critical assets.

This is a bad idea.

Google have stated multiple times, spanning back to 2012 at least, that they need access to these files in order to properly render your website.

That's right, at the render stage you need to allow Google to access these files.

Check your robots.txt file to make sure that you're not blocking these files, and additionally you can also add the following to make sure they are definitely getting access.

User-agent: Googlebot

Allow: *.css

Allow: *.js# global

BLOCK WORDPRESS CRAWLER TRAPS WITH ROBOTS.TXT

99% of the sites I audit fall for this trap.

The easiest way to deal with them for most, is simply blocking them with a disallow rule in robots.txt

Since you'll just be blocking these in your robots.txt file, here's my recommendation on [how to edit it](#) by the way, I want to only recommend conservative options.

There are others, but we'll get to that in a moment...

Add this to your robots.txt

User-agent: *

Disallow: /cgi-bin/

Disallow: /wp-admin/

Disallow: /xmlrpc.php

Disallow: /trackback/

Disallow: /feed/

You can optionally disallow feed links, comment links, [shortlinks](#), and wp-json links as well.

But on some sites you might want to keep them crawled (there are edge cases for everything) so I'm not including them out of the box in this tip.

CHECK YOUR THEME FOR SELF-REFERRING CANONICALS

Do you know if all of your themes posts/pages/products/categories have self-referring canonicals in place?

Chances are you won't know the answer to this for sure.

And I say this because it's something I ask people all the time, and most of the time we check and it's totally fine.

But in around 20% of cases people are using a theme where the developers haven't set these self-referring canonicals.

It causes all kinds of carnage if a few circumstances are present.

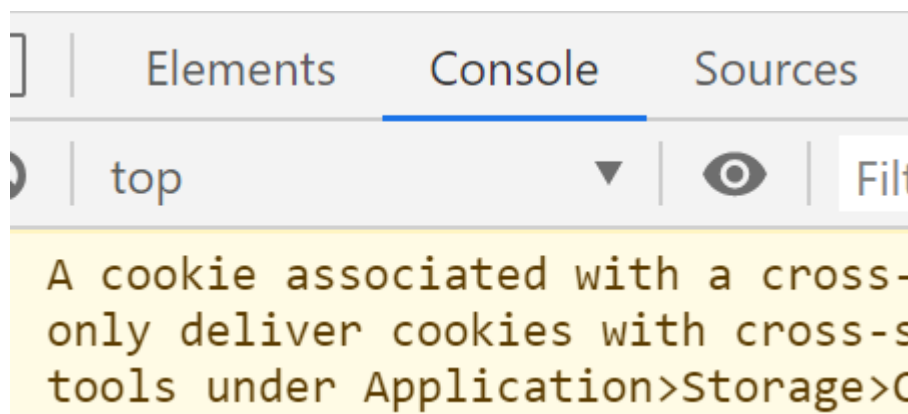
I highly recommend [this extension](#) for Google Chrome which allows you to check this kind of stuff in seconds, and then just go and quickly check different content types on your site.

URL ⓘ <https://pathtorch.com/>

Canonical ⓘ <https://pathtorch.com/>

STAY AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION WITH DEVELOPER TOOLS IN CHROME

Did you know that dev tools in chrome will tell you about big upcoming updates before they even happen?



If you open up a few pages on your site and hit `CMD + F12` or `CTRL + F12` you will open up the Developer Console.

Next, click on 'Console'.

This will then give you any notices about how any planned updates on Google Chrome are going to affect your website personally.

A lot of people miss this, and it's especially useful in niches where you have a lot of competitors using the same theme or even CMS (as a lot of these issues are often applicable to all WordPress sites, etc).

USE “HTML” SITEMAPS FOR BETTER INDEXING!

This is one of the best tips for improving indexing that people are ignoring...

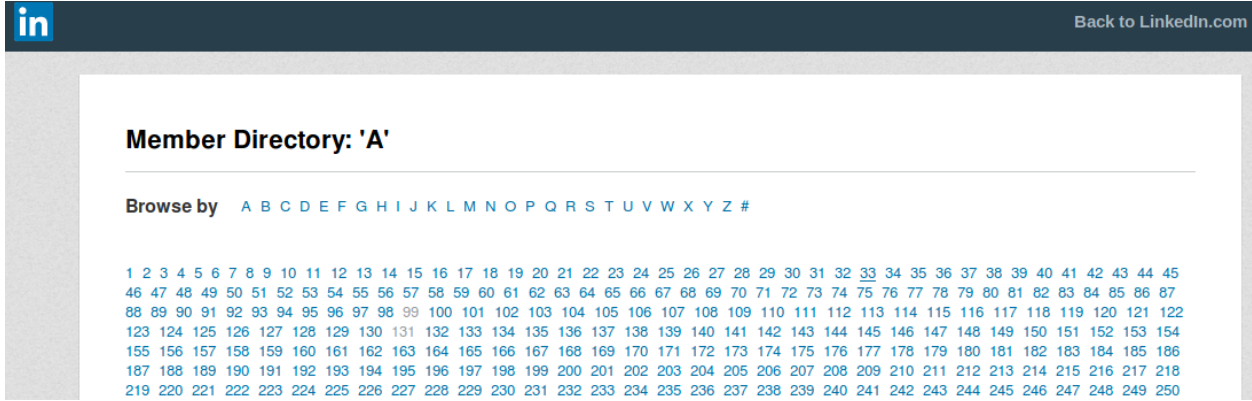
A ‘HTML Sitemap’ is a regular page with a complete list of links for all the pages on the site, or in some cases categories which then go to more “sitemap” pages.

People usually link to these via the footer of their website, and set the page to NoIndex to prevent soft 404 or low quality content issues.

Critically though, they get crawled and help with indexing.

Big sites use them...Amazon, Barnes&Noble, LinkedIn and so many more.

<https://www.linkedin.com/directory/people-a>



Props to Suresh Kumar G for showing me the LinkedIn example!

And as you can see, that page is designed for a purpose, and it’s not for humans.

Most sites aren’t as big as LinkedIn. But I still recommend having a page like this, that then links to locations, products, services, posts, etc!

USE THE RIGHT CATEGORY ARCHETYPE FOR YOU

Different kinds of sites require different kinds of solutions.

Category pages are some of the most important pages on your site. So getting them wrong is costing brands big time.

We operate at a time where search engines don't want to be carrying any deadweight after all.

Blogroll Categories

Blogroll categories on WordPress are your default setup on homepages that list recent posts, paginated pages, author archives, date archives, category pages and tag pages.

If you read what I said about the excerpt issue, you can see why this becomes a problem quickly.

If you choose to use blogroll logic, you're going to have to either change the excerpts, remove them or set the aforementioned types of pages to NoIndex.

That or you can convert things to one of the other category archetypes...

Custom Categories

The custom does away with templates. Instead, you create the category from scratch. Usually starting off with a blank page.

There is usually a lot of unique content on the page, it might not contain images, and they rarely contain excerpts at all.

Start Here



New to minimalism? New to our website? Welcome aboard! There's a lot of info here, and you certainly don't have to read it all at once, but here's the order we suggest for beginners. Start below, find topics that add value to your life, and take your time. There's nothing wrong with moving slowly.

A Custom Category Page. Credit: <https://www.theminimalists.com/start/>

This means these pages can be better optimized in an attempt to rank for broader search terms and even head terms.

These pages offer unique, non-duplicate content value and as such can be safely indexed.

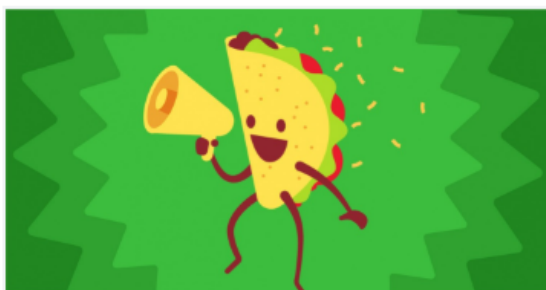
Hybrid Categories

OkDork by
NOAH KAGAN

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Hola, I am the Chief Sumo at [Sumo.com](#) and [AppSumo.com](#), where we help entrepreneurs kick more ass. Before that I was a cubicle monkey at Intel, #30 at Facebook and #4 at Mint. These are my stories on marketing, starting a business, personal improvement and productivity tips.

My latest posts:



My Favorite Author

[Read More](#)



Case Study: How to Double Your Ecommerce Sales

[Read More](#)

The easiest way to describe hybrid categories is that they are a mixture of the two of the above.

They utilize both unique content, and a blogroll where posts are automatically pulled into the page.

In the above example, you can see that my favorite marketer, Noah, is utilizing a hybrid category perfectly.

- He adds in some custom text, making this page offer unique value to the search engine.
- He then removes the excerpt from the posts so that he doesn't get slapped for any kind of duplicate content issues.

Product Categories

I wanted to comment on this, as people often see the parallels and worry accordingly when I talk about category archetypes...

Product categories are unique to ecommerce sites, and while they are very similar to blogroll categories they are also their own “kettle of fish”.

Most of them don't use excerpts, and as such they are immune to many of the duplicate content issues you'll come across on a blog.

Pagination can be an issue, but when isn't it... As can various logic on the page.

But if you have all of that setup correctly, and add some sort of buyers guide or at least category description to the main product category - you will be fine.

CREATE A CUSTOM AUTHOR PAGE

Ever wonder why some sites don't have author pages?

Assuming it's not because of an ill-fated decision that ignores the growing importance of E-A-T, it's simply because default author pages, especially on WordPress, suck.

They are usually little more than duplicates of content that can be found elsewhere on the site.

Especially if a site only has one or two authors.

The solution is not to simply disable author archives!!!

The real solution is to create a custom author page, which works much like a default about page, except you better optimize it.

You better optimize it by;

- Removing excerpts
- Removing pagination (instead highlighting only the best and most recent articles by the author)
- Adding in details about the author
- Adding in social links to the author
- Implementing relevant Schema.

SET EXPIRATION DATES FOR SEASONAL CONTENT & OFFERS

Do you have a website that has seasonal content and offers?

Then you need to be setting expiration dates for your content.

Not many people talk about this, but it's an extremely useful trick that gives your site the kind of logic it requires for best results.

Rolling certain content off of your site allows you to preserve link equity and crawl budget for more important and evergreen content.

If you have a developer, this is easy enough to achieve. However if you're managing your site by yourself then you might want to follow [this tutorial](#) on how to do it for WordPress.

SET DIFFERENT TITLES AND HEADLINES

It's always a good idea to use a different title and headline, it gives you a lot of options.

If you want to use a different headline/title to one of your top ranking competitors for a keyword you can actually have the best of both worlds.

How?

Using the competitors title as anchor text for one of your internal links.

Especially if you're using custom categories, this allows you to link to the posts in that category with whatever anchor text you like (with no developer intervention).

If you are using the Yoast SEO Plugin for WordPress you can do this incredibly easily.

When on a page, post or product, in the top right of your dashboard, there should be a Yoast logo.



Click it once.

Now on the right hand side, it should pull up a new menu.

Click on 'Snippet Preview'.

Snippet preview



<https://candykeyboards.com> › 2019 › 02 › 22 › technol...

Best Wearable Technology - CandyKeyboards

Please provide a meta description by editing the snippet below. If you don't, Google will try to find a relevant part of your post to show in the search results.



SEO title

+ Insert snippet variable

Title Page Separator Site title



Now you should see an overlay menu, and there should be a section called SEO title.

You can change this section to create a unique page title, that doesn't change the name of the post on the site itself.

Voila. It's that easy!

UX AUDIT FOR CONTENT UPGRADES

If you are familiar with content analysis, you'll know that people perform various types of analysis to find low-hanging fruit opportunities.

These opportunities then often result in ranking improvements after the scope of work is outlined and carried out.

One thing you don't hear about nearly enough, that I think matters increasingly more are UX Audits.

User Experience Audits are one of my favourite types of site audit, because it can simultaneously improve conversions and rankings.

This makes them an ideal on-page quick win.

The first thing you need to do is retrieve information about your sites most important pages/posts/products/categories.

Then look for the ones that are performing really badly from a usability standpoint.

- Bounce Rate
- Visitor Duration
- Conversion Rate
- Goal Completion

And just about anything else you've got setup.

You then go about finding ways to improve that page to bring those metrics more in line with your site average, industry average, etc.

I recommend checking the following reports in Google Analytics:

Behavior > Site Content > Landing Pages

Behavior > Site Content > Exit Pages

Landing Page ?	Sessions ? ↓	% New Sessions ?	New Users ?	Bounce Rate ?	Pages / Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?
		4,877 % of Total: 100.00% (4,877)	68.44% Avg for View: 68.44% (0.00%)	3,338 % of Total: 100.00% (3,338)	75.93% Avg for View: 75.93% (0.00%)	1.56 Avg for View: 1.56 (0.00%)
1. /	🔗 1,364 (27.97%)	75.81%	1,034 (30.98%)	53.01%	2.20	00:01:22
2. /audit-findings-analysis/	🔗 1,325 (27.17%)	72.75%	964 (28.88%)	87.77%	1.24	00:00:47

You can then use these to quickly gather that exact kind of data about your content.

Note: It's important to remember to filter the view by traffic source, as most of the time we're interested in organic traffic rather than referrals, direct visits, etc. They all perform differently!

It'll become easy to find outliers to begin with, and more difficult as time goes on (law of diminishing returns).

These pages then become your focus pages, and there are numerous things you can do to improve all of these.

I wrote an article for Drift.com about this very thing, talking about visitor retention techniques, [check it here](#).

I've also got more to say in the next few tips about this subject...

But what I didn't talk about in that article is one of my favourite tools for doing this kind of work.

UsabilityHub



UsabilityHub

Become a tester

Design confidently.

UsabilityHub is a remote user research platform that takes the guesswork out of design decisions by validating them with real users.

[Get started](#)

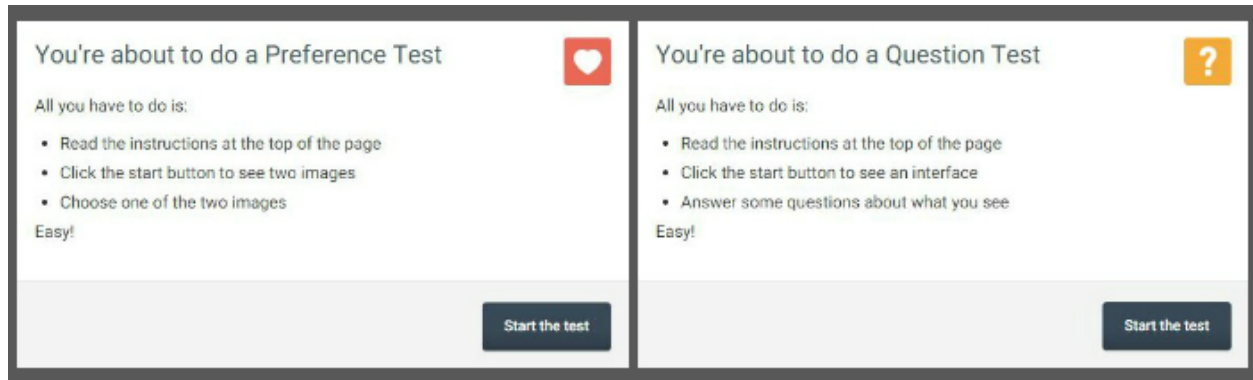
I've been using UsabilityHub for years. In fact, it's helped me increase conversions on some sites by crazy amounts.

The reason I like it is because the testers are usually real designers, although they have also added good options for demographic targeting in recent years too.

While I like tools like Google Optimize that let you test things with live visitors, this tool is just as important.

You need to find out data about how users are interacting with your site, but it's still important to run mockups by designers with years of experience first.

Of course, this is a paid platform, but it's relatively cheap and something I definitely recommend you using on specific articles, landing pages, product pages, etc.

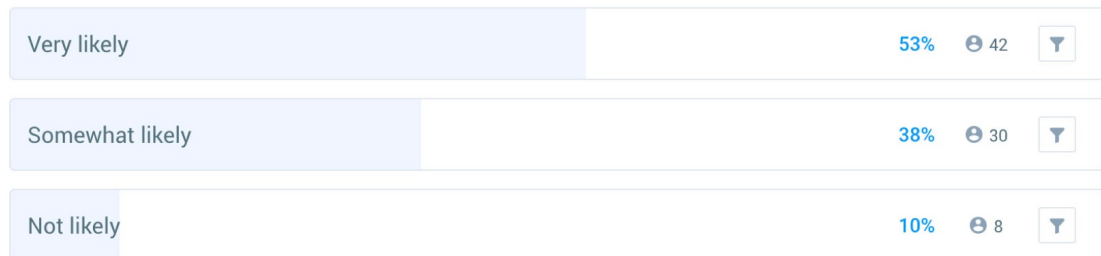


From the standpoint of a tester, they get given basic instructions based on the kind of test you want to run.

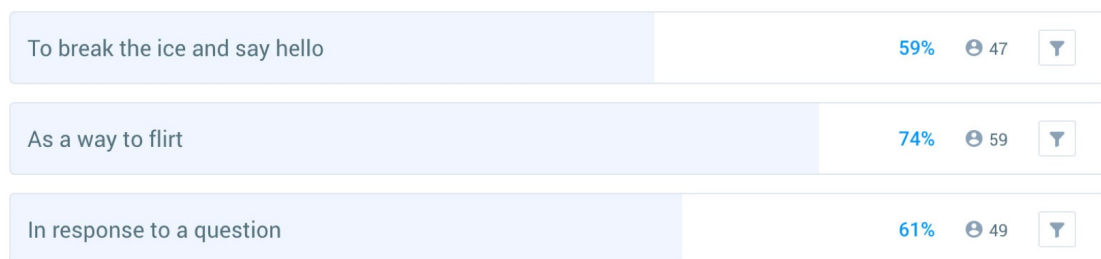
But you can also run all kinds of surveys as well;

Questions

How likely would you be to send a sticker or an emoji to a person on a dating application?



If you were to send a sticker or emoji to someone, what would the context most likely be? Please tick all that apply.



So it's just a tool that as someone who is focused on usability, you can't discount its usefulness.

That being said, I want to give you some more tried and tested ideas before you go out there and start testing things of your own...

2 SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPROVE DWELL TIME FOR BETTER USER ENGAGEMENT SIGNALS

Have you created some amazing content, then ranked the page only to have people bouncing like crazy and hanging around for little to no time?

You have to try to keep people on your page, and on your site and that means manufacturing reasons to do that.

Especially due to things like RankBrain, which deals somewhat with user engagement.

Definition: Dwell time is how long someone spends on your page.

It used to be that the search engines were more focused on bounce rate, but as the average bounce rate is around 41-51% - according to [this study](#), it became increasingly clear that it wasn't a good enough way to measure result satisfaction alone.

So today, we're seeing a lot more talk about dwell time, and this is because of the increasing reliance on machine-learning's role in influencing the search results.

For results in the top 10, dwell time is an important battleground that you want to master.

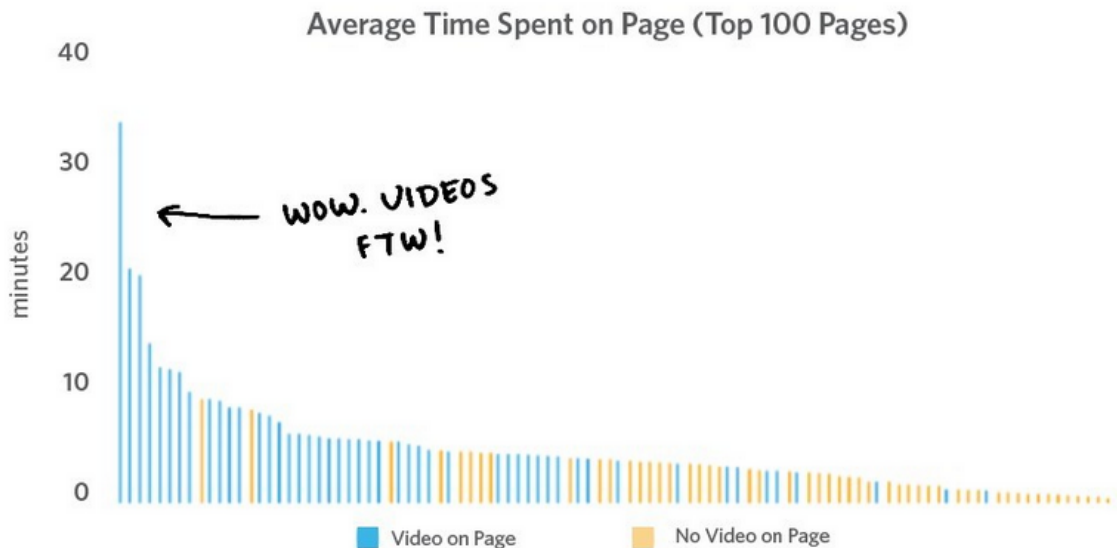
Two ways to improve your dwell time

Option 1: Add videos to your page.

Adding videos to your page encourages people to stay on the page by watching the video.

Our findings

This figure shows the average time spent on page for each of the top 100 pages, in descending order. There is a much higher concentration of pages with video (blue) on the left, correlating with more time spent on the page.



[A study](#) on Wistia found that there was clear and massive difference between the average time spent on a web page with videos and those without videos.

Simply embedding a YouTube video can give your page a massive advantage compared to those without it.

There are other options though...

Option 2: Add audio embeds to your page.

Audio embeds can sometimes work even better than video, as most videos are fairly short. An audio version of your article, or something like a relevant podcast episode can help increase dwell time significantly.

Noteworthy: A lot of people, myself included have also had good success creating quizzes and embedding them into the content. However, it's not as universally applicable to multiple types of content.

FONT-SIZE RATIOS FOR READABILITY

A good font-size ratio that works for most designers is the 3:4 ratio:

Unappealing pages that are difficult to digest make people leave. This then affects things like Bounce Rate, Dwell Time and inevitably your actual conversion rate!

You should use size and contrast to help break up your content and establish hierarchy. This then helps direct the flow of the user, and hopefully helps guide them to a conversion.

Font-size in pixels: 9, 12, 16, 21, 28, 37, 50, 67 etc.

This refers to the typographic scale, which is something that nearly all good designers use. Many people prefer the 3:4 ratio, while others prefer different scales.

2.488em (39.81px)	A Visual Type Scale
2.074em (33.18px)	A Visual Type Scale
1.728em (27.65px)	A Visual Type Scale
1.44em (23.04px)	A Visual Type Scale
1.2em (19.20px)	A Visual Type Scale
1em (16.00px)	A Visual Type Scale
0.833em (13.33px)	A Visual Type Scale
0.694em (11.11px)	A Visual Type Scale
0.579em (9.26px)	A Visual Type Scale

I prefer to use the 3:4 ratio, as I feel that it is best for optimal legibility.

While you don't have to use all of these font-sizes on your site, you will likely want to use most of them for various heading sizes and so on.

Recommended: You can use type-scale.com to look at various scale ratios and do the calculations automatically.

BUCKET BRIGADES TECHNIQUE

The bucket brigades technique is a content writing technique that holds people's attention.

It helps you skim read in a productive way, which incidentally, skimming is exactly how we do read... *So you need to make sure it's "directed skimming"*.

This then helps all of our user experience based metrics, which can mean better rankings!

This strategy also makes the writer seem more friendly and personable, which instills trust and keeps attention. *Like a conversation vs an essay.*

Here's the deal...

You can use them anywhere in your content.

Here are some examples

- So, here's the deal
- You might be wondering
- It gets better
- But here's the kicker
- Think about it
- Want to know the best part?
- Simple

These are just some generic examples, but you can and should use them to break up your content.

Nestle these kinds of words amongst your sentences where you can.

Simple.

CALL TO ATTENTION POINTS

Call to attention points are additional areas of content that are intended to grab people's attention.

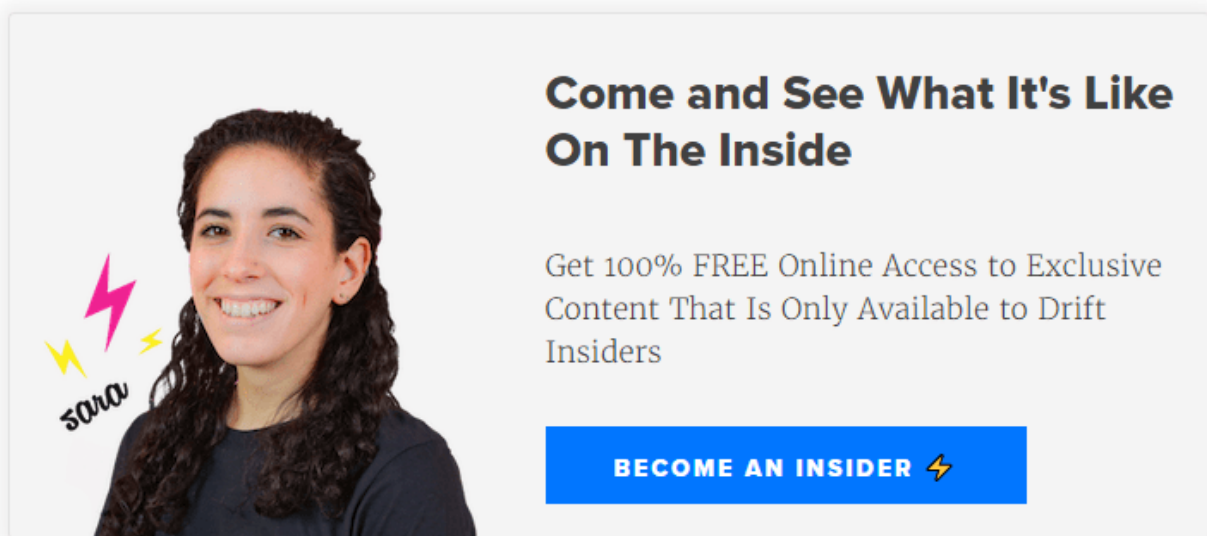
To snap them out of “skim scroll” mode.

Be specific and detailed, use exact figures and bullet points when you can.

And emojis really help break up your content visually.

Big brands are doing stuff like this all the time.

They use vibrant images and sections with lots going on to grab your attention, then couple it with a call-to-action:



There are many other call-to-attention techniques that I recommend you look into.

- Chatbots

-
- Quizzes
 - Interactive Elements
 - Gifs
 - Videos
 - CSS Transformations
 - Embeds such as Tweets

The main thing to know, is be creative and then once you have their attention be sure to do something with it.

Even if it's not a call-to-action, it can be a critical message you want to convey.

Peoples attention is valuable, it costs you a lot to get it.

Don't waste it.







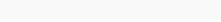
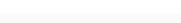


“SMASH UP” YOUR SITE FOR BETTER RANKINGS

This is one of the secrets that helped me become “SEO-Famous”.

And it involves demolishing parts of your site for better crawlability and link flow.

Essentialism - “Eliminate everything that doesn’t matter”.

3 Things You Can "Smash" For Better Rankings & UX.

Keyword		1 Day	7 Days	30 Days	Life	MS
	10	▲ 90	▲ 90	-	▲ 90	10
	27	▲ 73	▲ 3	-	▲ 68	210
	33	▲ 67	▲ 67	-	▲ 58	210
	34	▲ 66	▲ 66	-	▲ 66	90
 All I did was remove comments 🙋	53	▲ 47	▲ 47	-	▲ 30	50
	66	▲ 34	▲ 34	-	▲ 34	20
	71	▲ 15	▲ 15	-	▲ 29	10
	17	▲ 15	▲ 5	-	▲ 83	20
	21	▲ 5	▲ 6	-	▲ 79	720

Obviously always backup your site before doing this and leave up to 30 days to determine results.

#3 - Comments Section

Not everyone gets a lot of comments these days, and a lot of sites actually opt-out of providing any form of comment system on their content.

However, by default most CMS' (Content Management Systems) such as WordPress do enable comments.

If your comment section ISN'T being used, or you don't want it to be. It's actually best to remove them.

I've had insane results just from removing comments (see screenshot above).

This is most likely because it adds a whole bunch of links to every page, which [as I mentioned here](#) is a link flow issue.

#2 - Date Archives

Date archives are becoming less used now, but they still exist on more sites than you'd think.

While it is important to display the date of when your content was published, it's not important to create an entire page for articles from Sep' 2015 (as an example).

The reality is that you just shouldn't need to use them if you have a good site structure or a search function.

It adds nothing to users, and it definitely adds nothing to your SEO.

#1 - Sliders

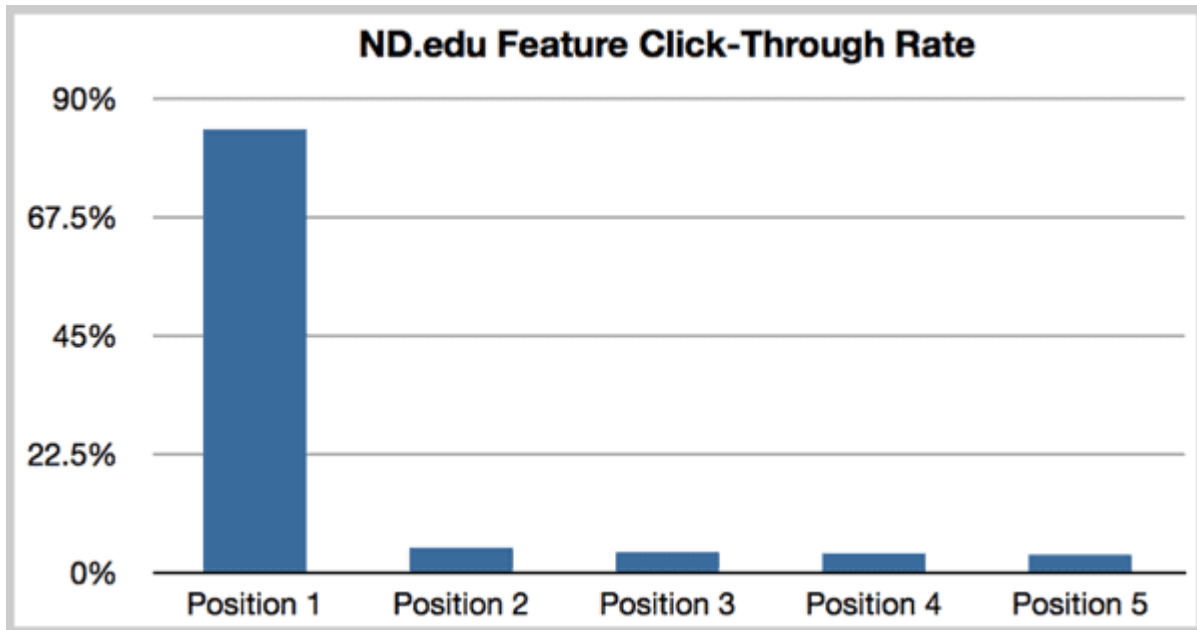
Sliders suck.

More than that, they're plain costly.

They reduce the load time of your site more than anything else, and what's worse is they introduce EVEN MORE links.

If there was a UX argument to be made, trust me I'd be the one to make it...

But [even studies](#) show that they're not worth the trade-off.



Pretty much nobody bothers with anything after the first "slide".

While fewer sites are using them than a few years ago, it's still the #1 thing I smash on any website I help with their SEO/UX.

In fact, I'd go as far as to say that I bulldoze them. Just get rid of them permanently, let them be resigned to history as another one of those things where we learned better.

KEEP A CHANGELOG

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Date	URL	Primary Keyword	Item	Original
2	12th September 2019	https://www.facebook.com/groups/onpageacademy/	Best Changelog!	Page Title	On-Page Academy
3	12th September 2019	https://pathtorch.com/	Pathtorch	Term Frequency	10
4					

When you're making any changes to your site, for just about any reason, you can screw things up.

The problem is that if you're not keeping track of what you did and when, it can be nearly impossible to figure out what caused the problems.

This is so important for SEO in particular.

Webmasters have a tendency to change a *whole* bunch of things at once.

This then makes it hard to decipher the data and learn what worked and what didn't.

Keeping a changelog teaches you about patience, it teaches you to optimize in a more organized and step-by-step way.

I built a template that you can use [here](#) (link makes a copy).

DECODE ALGORITHM UPDATES THE RIGHT WAY

If you have ever been hit by an algorithm update, you know how bad it can be.

But what you absolutely must do... Is *remain calm*.

“
**Muddy water is
best cleared
by leaving it
alone.**

- Alan Watts

Pathtorch

You need to let the dust settle and gather as much data as possible about your own situation in order to decode the algorithm update the right way.

Then you can ask questions of your data with more confidence, because acting too soon will just “muddy the data”.

1. Has it been more than one page?
2. Which pages?
3. Do these pages have anything in common?
4. Is it the whole site?

If it was 1, 2 or 3 then you will be able to decode the issue much easier, but people are rarely this lucky.

If your site fits 4 then know this...

Sitewide issues are caused by sitewide things.

- Your backlink profile
- Your anchor text strategy
- Your site speed
- Your content strategy
- Other technical issues

The point here is to give you some ideas, nobody knows your site better than you do, so you'll have to take some initiative in becoming your own detective.

The main thing to know is not to act too quickly, and never use algorithm update posts as anything more than a useful tool for ideas... It starts and ends with YOUR site.

FEATURED SNIPPETS

If you're in the lower positions on page one and you don't think you can get the number one spot then you should focus your attention on optimizing for featured snippets over organic rankings.

You already have a good chance because [over 99.58% of featured snippets](#) are awarded to URLs already on page 1.

Here's what you should do.

Place your answer above or below a heading as close to the top of the article as you can.

Google seems to give a preference to answers closer to the top of the article. The heading isn't required, but it does help if it uses related keywords, or directly addresses the question prior to the answer underneath.

Aim for around 40-50 words per answer as this seems to be the ideal number of words. Don't go over 300 characters at the maximum end. Try to include at least a few facts in the answer and keep it as concise as possible to make sure it is information heavy.

Finally, place a related image above or below the answer depending on where you placed the answer in relation to your heading initially. If you didn't use a heading then add the image wherever it fits best in your own mind.

Obviously, check the existing featured snippet to see what you can use as inspiration and what could be improved on.

FINAL TIPS

Less Publish, More Edit

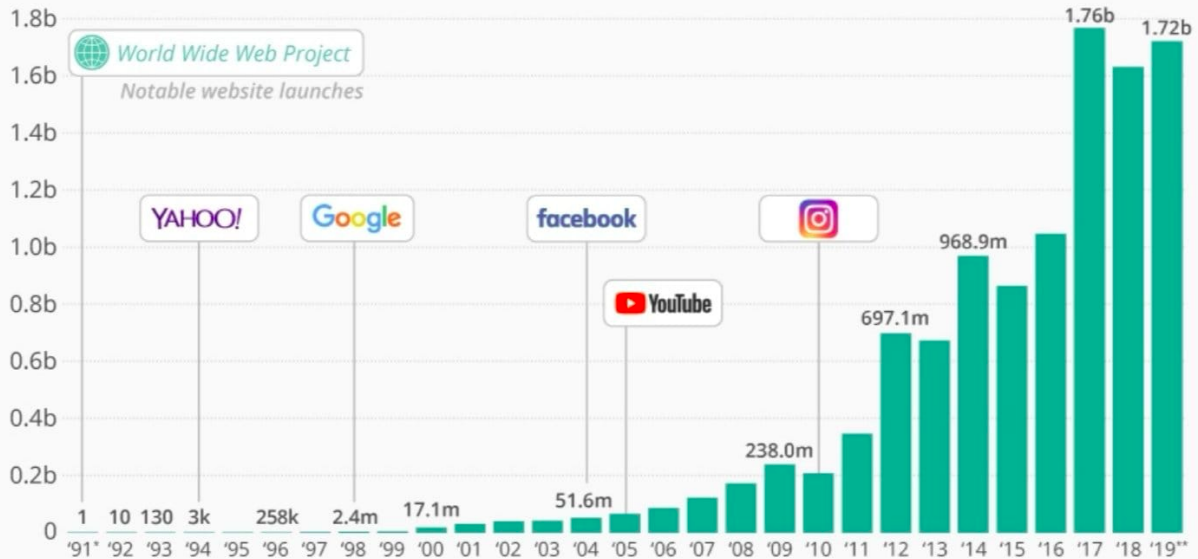
Wikipedia ranks incredibly well, and one thing you will never hear talked about is the fact that some of their best ranking pages have been edited hundreds, if not thousands of times.

With organic search providing less clicks than ever, and algorithm updates hurting sites badly. It's going to slowly become more profitable to focus on solidifying rankings.

Making sure that you capture and keep strategically important keywords for your business has always been important, but content burnout is starting to truly come to a head.

How Many Websites Are There?

Number of websites online from 1991 to 2019



"Website" is defined as a unique hostname, i.e. a name which can be resolved, using a name server, into an IP Address.

* As of August 1, 1991

** As of October 28, 2019 at 10:00 CET



Source: Internet Live Stats

statista

Competition is at an all time high, traffic is at an all time low.

Less will become more...

That's just my humble opinion and prediction for the next 5+ years.

I know that I am already spending a lot of my time focusing on systems and processes for getting the most out of what I've got.

You should definitely start doing the same in 2020 and I should think a lot of the tips in this book will help you do just that, and if not at least give you some incredibly useful ideas for how to do so.

Mobile-First Design

"With mobile-first indexing, Google will only index what it is able to crawl on the mobile version of the site, so if there is important content on the

desktop version which is not available on the mobile version, this will not be indexed.” - **Google**

Designing for “mobile-first” isn’t just about responsive websites.

It’s about making sure that you understand your audience.

If you have a desktop first design, your theme might decide to “hide” certain elements when on mobile.

The problem is, this won’t get indexed.

This means that more than ever, we now need to be thinking about providing a consistent experience across devices.

There are also lots of desktop designs that utilize widgets, which are demoted to the bottom of the page on mobile... *The logic just isn’t ‘logical’.*

All of these things are going to change over time, but the question is whether you’ll be one of the brands to take advantage of this before the rest of the crowd has time to catch up.

Afterword

Tips are useful, and can often save you from making mistakes that would have otherwise been a painful lesson.

However it's about much more than just avoiding mistakes.

It's about being proactive and benefiting from what we all look for from our on-page and technical work.

Ranking with less links than your competitors in less time.

When used as methods, actionable tips like the ones in this book help you do exactly that.

More from the author -

Thanks for reading,

Daniel