eCourse Outline

How to Write Website Content for Humans and Robots

1. What is website content?
   a. General definition of content: *stuff you put on the web for people to interact with*
   b. Website Content
      i. Page Content
         1. Describes your business and its core services
         2. Updated only when your business changes or you re-write
      ii. Blog/Article Content
         1. Dynamic content that’s generated regularly
         2. Provides helpful context & information related to what you do
         3. Helps attract users who are searching for info related to your business

2. Why worry about content?
   a. It connects you with your audience.
      i. Show your expertise in your field.
      ii. Educate your potential customers.
      iii. Earn the trust and respect of your audience.
      iv. Bring an interested person into the fold of your business.
   b. Website Content = Search Engine Optimization
      i. Content is the primary driver of search engine ranking.
      ii. Search engines look for context. Content gives them that context.

3. Match your content and your users.
   a. Users should find the content they expect when they visit your site via a search engine.
   b. Content creation is part of crafting a great user experience. (See our eCourse “Three Steps to Crafting an Effective Small Business Website.”)
   c. Content creation is an ongoing process:
      i. Write for visitor engagement.
      ii. Measure that visitor engagement.
      iii. Re-write for more and better visitor engagement.

4. How can I identify good topics and make helpful content?
a. Google Suggest – Use the autocomplete feature in Google’s search to explore searches around your business, and write down the results. It’s a simple and effective way to do free keyword research and to understand how users are searching for information relevant to what you do.
b. Your knowledge of your customers/clients
   i. What do customers/clients ask you about on a regular basis?
   ii. What do you wish your customers/clients would ask you about?
c. Search Engine Optimization research tools – paid third-party services designed to help you find great topics, e.g.
   i. Spyfu
   ii. Moz
   iii. SEMRush

5. How to Use Keywords
a. Each page/article should have a focus keyword that’s the primary topic.
b. Find your focus keyword using the techniques you used to generate topics: Google Suggest, knowledge of your customers/industry, and keyword research tools
c. Be sure your focus keyword is contained:
   i. In your page title
   ii. In at least one heading in your page content
   iii. In the first paragraph of your text

6. General Content Writing Guidelines
a. Make it easy to read.
   i. Increases engagement
   ii. Pushes you higher in search rankings
   iii. Increases the likelihood of conversion
   iv. How to write readable content
      1. Well-structured title that provides a clear picture of the page content (and uses your focus keyword)
      2. Clear subheadings that flow like an outline
      3. Concise, punchy paragraphs
b. Use plain language.
   i. Analyze your content for readability using plugins or external tools.
   ii. Site content should usually be written at around an 8th grade reading level.
   iii. Avoid jargon and technical terms. If they’re necessary, explain them to the layperson in your text.
c. Avoid long blocks of text.
   i. Break up text with visual elements like headings, subheadings, photos, and charts.
ii. Break up long paragraphs into shorter ones.

d. Edit thoroughly. Ask yourself:
   i. Did I address my reader’s concerns?
   ii. Did I strike an appropriate tone?
   iii. Did I avoid using jargon?
   iv. Did I use white space and layout?

e. Voice and Perspective – consider your user’s perspective:
   i. How would a potential customer ask a question?
   ii. What sorts of words and phrases would they use?
   iii. How do they feel when they come to your site?

7. To blog, or not to blog...
   a. Why you shouldn’t blog: blogs are time consuming. They require:
      i. A strategic plan
      ii. Great visual content
      iii. Dedicated marketing strategy
      iv. Regularly-published new content
   b. Why you should blog: blogs are great lead generators!
      i. Establish trust & credibility
      ii. Higher place in search engine rankings
      iii. Interact with your audience
      iv. Funnel traffic from paid ads

8. Content Writing for Blogs
   a. Average length of top posts: 1800 words
   b. Shoot for 1,000-8,000 words, depending on your content goals
   c. Posts should be informed by keyword and topic research
   d. Make your posts easily shareable
   e. Add internal links to other pages on your website

9. In summary, write for humans, and the robots will follow!