We're now on LinkedIn: For news and resources from Google Search on making your site discoverable, follow us on LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/googlesearchcentral/).

Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content

Google's automated ranking systems (https://www.google.com/search/howsearchworks/how-search-works/ranking-results/) are designed to present helpful, reliable information that's primarily created to benefit people, not to gain search engine rankings, in the top Search results. This page is designed to help creators evaluate if they're producing such content.

Self-assess your content

Evaluating your own content against these questions can help you gauge if the content you're making is helpful and reliable. Beyond asking yourself these questions, consider having others you trust but who are unaffiliated with your site provide an honest assessment.

Also consider an audit of the drops you may have experienced. What pages were most impacted and for what types of searches? Look closely at these to understand how they're assessed against some of the questions outlined here.

Content and quality questions

- Does the content provide original information, reporting, research, or analysis?

- Does the content provide a substantial, complete, or comprehensive description of the topic?

- Does the content provide insightful analysis or interesting information that is beyond the obvious?

- If the content draws on other sources, does it avoid simply copying or rewriting those sources, and instead provide substantial additional value and originality?

- Does the main heading or page title provide a descriptive, helpful summary of the content?

- Does the main heading or page title avoid exaggerating or being shocking in nature?

- Is this the sort of page you'd want to bookmark, share with a friend, or recommend?

- Would you expect to see this content in or referenced by a printed magazine, encyclopedia, or book?

- Does the content provide substantial value when compared to other pages in search results?

- Does the content have any spelling or stylistic issues?

- Is the content produced well, or does it appear sloppy or hastily produced?

- Is the content mass-produced by or outsourced to a large number of creators, or spread across a large network of sites, so that individual pages or sites don't get as much attention or care?

Expertise questions

- Does the content present information in a way that makes you want to trust it, such as clear sourcing, evidence of the expertise involved, background about the author or the site that publishes it, such as through links to an author page or a site's About page?

- If someone researched the site producing the content, would they come away with an impression that it is well-trusted or widely-recognized as an authority on its topic?

- Is this content written or reviewed by an expert or enthusiast who demonstrably knows the topic well?

- Does the content have any easily-verified factual errors?

Provide a great page experience

Google's core ranking systems look to reward content that provides a good page experience. Site owners seeking to be successful with our systems should not focus on only one or two aspects of page experience. Instead, check if you're providing an overall great page experience across many aspects. For more advice, see our page, Understanding page experience in Google Search results (/search/docs/appearance/page-experience).

Focus on people-first content

People-first content means content that's created primarily for people, and not to manipulate search engine rankings. How can you evaluate if you're creating people-first content? Answering yes to the questions below means you're probably on the right track with a people-first approach:

- Do you have an existing or intended audience for your business or site that would find the content useful if they came directly to you?

- Does your content clearly demonstrate first-hand expertise and a depth of knowledge (for example, expertise that comes from having actually used a product or service, or visiting a place)?

- Does your site have a primary purpose or focus?

- After reading your content, will someone leave feeling they've learned enough about a topic to help achieve their goal?

- Will someone reading your content leave feeling like they've had a satisfying experience?

Avoid creating search engine-first content

We recommend that you focus on creating people-first content to be successful with Google Search, rather than search engine-first content made primarily to gain search engine rankings. Answering yes to some or all of the questions below is a warning sign that you should reevaluate how you're creating content:

- Is the content primarily made to attract visits from search engines?

- Are you producing lots of content on many different topics in hopes that some of it might perform well in search results?

- Are you using extensive automation to produce content on many topics?

- Are you mainly summarizing what others have to say without adding much value?

- Are you writing about things simply because they seem trending and not because you'd write about them otherwise for your existing audience?

- Does your content leave readers feeling like they need to search again to get better information from other sources?

- Are you writing to a particular word count because you've heard or read that Google has a preferred word count? (No, we don't.)

- Did you decide to enter some niche topic area without any real expertise, but instead mainly because you thought you'd get search traffic?

- Does your content promise to answer a question that actually has no answer, such as suggesting there's a release date for a product, movie, or TV show when one isn't confirmed?

- Are you changing the date of pages to make them seem fresh when the content has not substantially changed?

- Are you adding a lot of new content or removing a lot of older content primarily because you believe it will help your search rankings overall by somehow making your site seem "fresh?"

(No, it won't)

What about SEO? Isn't that search engine-first?

There are some things you could do that are specifically meant to help search engines better discover and understand your content. Collectively, this is called "search engine optimization" or SEO, for short. Google's own SEO guide (/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide) covers best practices to consider. SEO can be a helpful activity when it is applied to people-first content, rather than search engine-first content.

Get to know E-E-A-T and the quality rater guidelines

Google's automated systems are designed to use many different factors (https://www.google.com/search/howsearchworks/how-search-works/ranking-results/) to rank great content. After identifying relevant content, our systems aim to prioritize those that seem most helpful. To do this, they identify a mix of factors that can help determine which content demonstrates aspects of experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness, or what we call E-E-A-T.

Of these aspects, trust is most important. The others contribute to trust, but content doesn't necessarily have to demonstrate all of them. For example, some content might be helpful based on the experience it demonstrates, while other content might be helpful because of the expertise it shares.

While E-E-A-T itself isn't a specific ranking factor, using a mix of factors that can identify content with good E-E-A-T is useful. For example, our systems give even more weight to content that aligns with strong E-E-A-T for topics that could significantly impact the health, financial stability, or safety of people, or the welfare or well-being of society. We call these "Your Money or Your Life" topics, or YMYL for short.

Search quality raters (https://www.google.com/search/howsearchworks/how-search-works/rigorous-testing/) are people who give us insights on if our algorithms seem to be providing good results, a way to help confirm our changes are working well. In particular, raters are trained to understand if content has strong E-E-A-T. The criteria they use to do this is outlined in our search quality rater guidelines (https://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/hsw-sqrg.pdf).

Search raters have no control over how pages rank. Rater data is not used directly in our ranking algorithms. Rather, we use them as a restaurant might get feedback cards from diners. The feedback helps us know if our systems seem to be working.

Reading the guidelines may help you self-assess how your content is doing from an E-E-A-T perspective, improvements to consider, and help align it conceptually with the different signals that our automated systems use to rank content.

Ask "Who, How, and Why" about your content

Consider evaluating your content in terms of "Who, How, and Why" as a way to stay on course with what our systems seek to reward.

Who (created the content)

Something that helps people intuitively understand the E-E-A-T of content is when it's clear who created it. That's the **"Who"** to consider. When creating content, here are some who-related questions to ask yourself:

- Is it self-evident to your visitors who authored your content?

- Do pages carry a byline, where one might be expected?

- Do bylines lead to further information about the author or authors involved, giving background about them and the areas they write about?

If you're clearly indicating who created the content, you're likely aligned with the concepts of E-E-A-T and on a path to success. We strongly encourage adding accurate authorship information, such as bylines to content where readers might expect it.

How (the content was created)

It's helpful to readers to know how a piece of content was produced: this is the **"How"** to consider including in your content.

For example, with product reviews, it can build trust with readers when they understand the number of products that were tested, what the test results were, and how the tests were conducted, all accompanied by evidence of the work involved, such as photographs. It's advice we share more about in our Write high quality product reviews (/search/docs/specialty/ecommerce/write-high-quality-reviews) help page.

Many types of content may have a "How" component to them. That can include automated, AI-generated, and AI-assisted content. Sharing details about the processes involved can help readers and visitors better understand any unique and useful role automation may have served.

If automation is used to substantially generate content, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Is the use of automation, including AI-generation, self-evident to visitors through disclosures or in other ways?

- Are you providing background about how automation or AI-generation was used to create content?

- Are you explaining why automation or AI was seen as useful to produce content?

Overall, AI or automation disclosures are useful for content where someone might think "How was this created?" Consider adding these when it would be reasonably expected. For more, see our blog post and FAQ: How Google Search views AI-generated content (/search/blog/2023/02/google-search-and-ai-content).

Why (was the content created)

"Why" is perhaps the most important question to answer about your content. Why is it being created in the first place?

The "why" should be that you're creating content primarily to help people, content that is useful to visitors if they come to your site directly. If you're doing this, you're aligning with E-E-A-T generally and what our core ranking systems (/search/updates/core-updates) seek to reward.

If the "why" is that you're primarily making content to attract search engine visits, that's not aligned with what our systems seek to reward. If you use automation, including AI-generation, to produce content for the primary purpose of manipulating search rankings, that's a violation of our spam policies (/search/docs/essentials/spam-policies#scaled-content).