SOP: E-E-A-T and Content Credibility

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# SOP: E-E-A-T and Content Credibility

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## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a formal framework for implementing and maintaining signals of credibility across all web content. It is based on Google's E-E-A-T framework—Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness—which is used to evaluate the quality and reliability of content. Adherence to this SOP is non-negotiable for "Your Money or Your Life" (YMYL) topics, which are those that can significantly impact a person's health, finances, or safety.

## 2.0 Scope

) involved in the creation, auditing, and maintenance of content for Discover Web Solutions and its clients. It covers the implementation of all E-E-A-T signals and the process for ensuring content remains fresh, accurate, and trustworthy over time.

## 3.0 Definitions

* \*\*E-E-A-T:\*\* An acronym for Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness. It is a framework used by Google to assess the credibility of content and its creator.
* \*\*Content Freshness:\*\* The process of systematically identifying, updating, and republishing existing content to ensure it remains accurate, relevant, and trustworthy.
* \*\*YMYL (Your Money or Your Life):\*\* A category of topics that could significantly impact a person's health, happiness, financial stability, or safety. Content in this category is held to the highest standard of E-E-A-T.

## 4.0 Procedures

### 4.1 Procedure: E-E-A-T Implementation Framework

Building E-E-A-T is a continuous process that involves embedding signals of credibility throughout a website and its content. The following framework details actionable techniques for each of the four components.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Technique Description** | **Implementation Location(s)** | **Human Impact** | **SEO Impact** |
| \*\*Experience\*\* |  |  |  |  |
|  | Include original photos/videos showing first-hand use of a product or completion of a process. | Body content of blog posts, reviews, case studies. | High | High |
|  | Write in the first person ("I found that...", "In my experience...") to share personal anecdotes or lessons learned. | Body content, author bios. | High | Medium |
|  | Create detailed "behind the scenes" content showing how a product is made or a service is delivered. | Blog posts, About Us page, social media. | High | Medium |
|  | Feature user-generated content (UGC) like customer photos or videos on product/service pages. | Product pages, testimonials page, social media feeds. | High | Medium |
| \*\*Expertise\*\* |  |  |  |  |
|  | Create comprehensive, in-depth content that covers a topic exhaustively (e.g., pillar pages, ultimate guides). | Blog posts, pillar pages, resource hubs. | High | High |
|  | Assign content to authors with demonstrable credentials and qualifications in the subject matter. | Author bylines on every article. | High | High |
|  | Create detailed, standalone author bio pages that list qualifications, education, publications, and areas of expertise. | Author bio pages, linked from every article. | High | High |
|  | Cite reputable, authoritative sources (e.g., scientific studies, industry reports, government data) with outbound links. | Body content of articles and guides. | Medium | High |
|  | Use Author and ProfilePage schema markup to programmatically identify the author and their profile. | On-page HTML (article schema), author bio page HTML. | Low | High |
| \*\*Authoritativeness\*\* |  |  |  |  |
|  | Secure backlinks and mentions from other well-respected websites and experts in the same industry. | Off-page (earned media, guest posting, digital PR). | High | High |
|  | Publish original research, studies, or industry surveys that become a go-to source for others to cite. | Blog posts, dedicated research reports, white papers. | High | High |
|  | List awards, certifications, and press mentions prominently on the website. | Homepage, About Us page, footer, dedicated "Press" page. | High | Medium |
|  | Encourage and monitor branded search queries (users searching for "[Brand Name]"). | Off-page (brand building activities). | High | High |
|  | Feature guest posts from other recognized industry experts on your blog. | Blog. | Medium | Medium |
|  | Maintain active and professional social media profiles linked from the website. | Website header/footer. | Medium | Low |
| \*\*Trustworthiness\*\* |  |  |  |  |
|  | Provide clear and easy-to-find contact information (phone number, email, physical address). | Contact Us page, footer, header. | High | High |
|  | Create a detailed "About Us" page explaining the company's history, mission, and the people behind it. | About Us page. | High | High |
|  | Display customer reviews and testimonials prominently. | Homepage, product/service pages, dedicated testimonials page. | High | High |
|  | Implement HTTPS (SSL certificate) to secure the entire website. | Entire website (URL starts with "https://"). | High | High |
|  | Have clear Terms of Service, Privacy Policy, and Return Policy pages. | Website footer. | Medium | High |
|  | Display trust seals, such as secure payment badges (e.g., Visa, PayPal) or industry certifications. | Checkout pages, product pages, footer. | High | Medium |
|  | Ensure content is factually accurate and kept up-to-date, with "last updated" dates displayed. | Blog posts, articles, guides. | High | High |

### 4.2 Procedure: Content Freshness Management

Trustworthiness must be maintained over time. Outdated or inaccurate content erodes user trust and signals to search engines that a page is no longer the best resource. A systematic process for updating content is essential for maintaining E-E-A-T.

### \*\*Step 1: Triggers for a Content Update\*\*

A content update should be initiated when specific data-driven triggers are observed, prioritized by potential impact.

* \*\*Performance Decay Triggers:\*\*
* \*\*Significant Traffic Drop:\*\* A sustained drop in organic traffic (>20% month-over-month) to a high-value page.
* \*\*Keyword Ranking Decline:\*\* A drop in rankings for primary keywords (e.g., falling off page 1 or dropping 5+ positions).
* \*\*Reduced Engagement Metrics:\*\* A notable increase in bounce rate or decrease in time on page.
* \*\*Conversion Rate Decline:\*\* A drop in leads or sales from a commercial or transactional page.
* \*\*Content-Based Triggers:\*\*
* \*\*Outdated Information:\*\* The content contains statistics, dates, or references that are no longer current.
* \*\*Factual Inaccuracy:\*\* A process, law, or fact mentioned in the content has changed.
* \*\*Broken Links:\*\* The page contains broken internal or external links.
* \*\*SERP Evolution:\*\* A manual review of the SERP shows the dominant intent or content format for the keyword has changed.

### \*\*Step 2: The Content Update and Republishing Process\*\*

Once a page is flagged, it must undergo a structured refresh process.

1. \*\*Re-assess Search Intent:\*\* Perform a fresh SERP analysis for the primary keyword to determine if the dominant intent or required format has changed.
2. \*\*Conduct a Content Gap Analysis:\*\* Compare the existing content against the current top 3-5 ranking pages to identify new subtopics or user questions that are now required for comprehensiveness.
3. \*\*Perform the Content Rewrite/Expansion:\*\*

* Update all outdated statistics, dates, and facts.
* Rewrite sections that are unclear or inaccurate.
* Add new sections to cover identified content gaps.
* Incorporate new visuals, examples, or expert quotes.
* Optimize the content based on the latest structural and stylistic best practices.

1. \*\*Review and Quality Assurance:\*\* The updated content must pass the standard editorial review process for accuracy, clarity, and tone.
2. \*\*Republish the Content:\*\*

* The content MUST be updated on the \*\*existing URL\*\*. Creating a new URL will sacrifice the page's authority and backlinks and is forbidden.
* The "Last Updated" date must be changed to the current date.

### \*\*Step 3: Signaling "Freshness" to Users and Search Engines\*\*

After republishing, it is vital to explicitly signal that the content has been updated.

* \*\*Signaling to Users:\*\*
* \*\*Display a "Last Updated On..." Date:\*\* Prominently display the new update date near the top of the article. This immediately communicates to users that the information is current.
* \*\*Add an "Editor's Note" (for major updates):\*\* Consider adding a note at the top explaining the scope of the update (e.g., \*"Editor's Note: This article was originally published in May 2023 and has been completely updated for accuracy and comprehensiveness as of June 2025."\*).
* \*\*Signaling to Search Engines:\*\*
* \*\*Update the Modified Date in the Sitemap:\*\* Ensure the `<lastmod>` tag for the URL in the XML sitemap is updated to the new date to encourage re-crawling.
* \*\*Use Schema Markup:\*\* The `dateModified` property within Article or BlogPosting schema must be updated to the new date.
* \*\*Request Re-indexing:\*\* Use the "URL Inspection" tool in Google Search Console to submit the updated URL, which can expedite Google's recognition of the changes.