Content

This lesson is all about content. Before we dive into the actual creation of content, we'll discuss two important terms: search intent and content intent. Then, we'll go into turning your keyword list into actual landing pages. We'll discuss three types of website content: cornerstone content, product pages, and blog posts.

Search intent and content intent

Before we go into how to turn your keyword list into actual landing pages on your site and how you should optimize your pages for SEO, there are two more terms we need to discuss: search intent and content intent. These two terms are closely related to each other. Let's first dive into search intent.

What is search intent?

We've already established that you should take the perspective of your audience when crafting your keyword list. When it comes to creating pages, you need to take this a step further. We need to consider exactly what the searcher expects to find on a page when searching for a term. Only then can we craft a page that reflects those expectations.

So, whenever someone enters a search query into a search engine, they are on a quest for something. This is called search intent. Why are they searching? What are they looking for? Do they have a question that they want answered? Or are they looking to buy something?

Search intent and Google

Over the years, Google has become more and more able to determine the search intent of people. And Google wants to rank pages highest that fit the search term as well as the search intent of a specific search query.

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That's why it's essential to make sure your post or page fits the search intent of your audience.

Image 1: Search intent

Different types of search intent

Now we know what search intent is and why it is important for SEO, let's dive into the different types of search intent. We distinguish four types of search intent:

1. **Informational intent**
   This type of intent applies when people are trying to find information on a specific topic. This could be information about the weather, information about educating children, or information about guitars. For example, for yoast.com, we create blog posts for people looking for information on SEO. These posts are optimized for informational intent.

2. **Navigational intent**
   The second type of search intent is called navigational intent. People have a navigational intent when they want to access a specific website by entering the term in a search engine. So, if people search for "Yoast", they're probably trying to reach our website yoast.com. And people who search for "Facebook" are usually on their way to the Facebook website.

Ranking high on a navigational term is only beneficial for your organic traffic if your site is the site people are looking for. A few years ago, Yoast had a Google Analytics plugin, and we ranked pretty well for the term "Google Analytics". However, it didn't drive any traffic to our site because people searching for "Google Analytics" were looking for the Google Analytics website and were hardly ever interested in our plugin.

3. **Commercial intent**

   When people have a commercial intent, they want to buy something sometime soon and they are doing research before making a purchase. For instance, what washing machine would be best? Or which SEO plugin is the most helpful? For example, on yoast.com, we've created sales pages for our plugins and courses. These pages are optimized for commercial intent.

4. **Transactional intent**

   People have a transactional intent when they are looking to buy something after doing their commercial intent searches. Lots of people buy stuff on the internet and browse the web to find the best purchase. For example, the sales pages on yoast.com have multiple buttons through which people can buy our products immediately, so these pages are optimized for transactional intent.

Type of intent	People want to...
informational intent	find information on a specific topic
navigational intent	access a specific website by entering the term in a search engine
commercial intent	do research before making a purchase
transactional intent	buy something, after doing their commercial intent searches

Table 1: Types of intent

You should try to find out which intents apply to you, your searchers, and your keywords. On every page you optimize, you should try to provide

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people with the content they expect. As we've seen, this is especially important because Google has become better at recognizing search intent and ranking pages that match this intent.

Example: Anna's sustainable leather

Let's go back to the example we discussed in earlier modules: Anna's sustainable leather website. In her webshop, Anna sells products made from sustainable textile, a leather alternative made from pineapple waste. Anna could create sales pages that are optimized for a commercially driven keyword like "buy vegan leather shoes". The search intent for these pages is most likely transactional.

However, Anna doesn't just have a webshop, she has a blog as well. This is where the searcher with informational intent could enter her site. For example, she could write blog posts optimized for keywords like "how is pineapple leather made" or "how to clean vegan leather", where she gives information on these topics. So, Anna has to create different pages to accommodate the different kinds of search intents.

Content intent

From search intent, it's only a small step to content intent. Content intent is all about lining up your content with your audience's expectations. When creating your page, it's vital that you are conscious of what you're trying to achieve with that page. Before you start writing, carefully consider what you want that particular page to achieve. Should it be focused on providing information? Should it be optimized to convince potential customers to buy? Should it mainly engage users with your brand? Only when you have a clear idea of the goal of the page, you can start working towards achieving that goal.

Landing pages

Now that you've learned about search intent and content intent, it's time to go into landing pages. Landing pages are the pages you want your audience to reach when they are searching for a keyword. This means that you need to have good landing pages for your most important keywords. This is important for three reasons:

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1. to rank well in the search engines;
2. to make sure visitors can find your landing pages;
3. to make visitors convert.

With a good landing page, you keep your visitor on your site, and you increase the likelihood of them taking the action you want them to take, whether it's buying a product or any other type of conversion.

For each keyword, you want to identify one page you want to rank with. If we, at Yoast, want to rank for "keyword research", our [Ultimate guide to keyword research](#) would be a great candidate for a landing page. You don't have to create landing pages for all of your keywords immediately. And don't forget: you can optimize one page for multiple keywords. Creating landing pages for your keywords can be a long-term project. The more specific your term is, the further down into your site structure the term's landing page belongs.

Creating cornerstone content

We've discussed search intent and content intent, now let's dive into the actual content of your site. We'll discuss three types of website content. First off: cornerstone content, also called cornerstone articles. Cornerstone articles are the most important articles on your website. These articles directly reflect the mission of your company, and you definitely want to rank for them. You usually want to rank for your most important keywords with your cornerstone articles.

Which articles are my cornerstones?

You should choose your cornerstones carefully. Think of four or five pages you would like someone to read if they first visit your website. These articles should be the cornerstones of your site. In other words, they should form the basis of the topics you discuss on your site. For example: at Yoast, we write ultimate guides for every important SEO-related topic. We have ultimate guides for site structure, SEO copywriting, mobile SEO, blogging, keyword research, et cetera. These

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are our cornerstone content articles. You should write cornerstone articles about the keywords you definitely want to rank for.

The importance of cornerstone content

Now that we know what cornerstone content is, let's dive into the importance of cornerstone content. Cornerstone content should play a significant role in any SEO strategy. It can be rather hard to rank for search terms that are very popular. A cornerstone approach could help you tackle those competitive search terms. If you write a lot of articles about similar topics, you need to tell Google which one is the most important. This article can be a cornerstone article.

What should a cornerstone article look like?

In general, cornerstone articles should be lengthy articles which are timeless, and very regularly updated. Cornerstone articles should definitely be informative articles, where you explain something to your audience. You want them to understand more about a topic or you want them to use the information by putting theory to practice. Even on an online shop, cornerstone content should be informative, rather than focused on convincing people to buy your products. For example, you could give your readers information about the uniqueness of your products, or about the use of the products. Of course, you can use your cornerstone articles to send people to your product pages, but the main focus of the text itself should be on informing your audience about the topic at hand.

Site structure and internal linking are very important here. When writing a cornerstone article, always consider what other pages on your website you could link to. Cornerstone articles usually contain information on topics you've also written more specific posts about. Make sure you're linking internally from the more specific posts to the cornerstone content so it's clear for search engines that that is the most important article for you for a particular keyword. This will improve your chances of ranking for your cornerstone article.

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Example: Choosing road bikes

A great example of a cornerstone article is [this article](#) (also shown in Image 2) on how to choose the best road bike. This article discusses which road bike you need in different situations and for different riders. It answers questions like: which bike should someone choose for riding on rough pavement? Or for riding on gravel? What are the specifications of the various road bikes? Which bike is suitable for climbing and descending?

Furthermore, the page links to more specific pages if you need more information, like pages providing information on different materials, the different bike models, and the different techniques that are used for the bikes. And it links to product pages as well (see the pink arrows in Image 1). It makes sense here to link to different road bike product pages because that is probably something people will be interested in.

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How to choose the best road bike

SEE ALL ROAD BIKES

Domane

Domane is designed to provide the smoothest, most stable ride, and offers the most versatility among our road lines. These attributes make it an ideal choice for endurance riders going out for long century rides, sportive, or fondo events.

Domane is the best choice for riders looking to ride on a variety of surfaces. Its combination of endurance geometry and IsoSpeed technology provide predictable handling, more stability, and an overall smoother ride. This results in more comfort and control over rough, cracked pavement. Additional clearance for wider tires and disc brake options also make Domane an optimal choice for riding on gravel roads.

The Domane family is available in 4 distinct carbon and aluminum platforms with either disc or rim brakes in addition to Women's models for those riders looking for women's-specific components.

See all Domane bikes →

Checkpoint

Checkpoint is the gravel bike that gives you the versatility and capability you need to tackle everything from epic backwoods adventures to fun-filled commutes and gravel racing pursuits. It's packed with gravel-specific features and off-road capability, and was designed to be set up in a wide variety of configurations depending on what the ride calls for. Checkpoint has all-weather disc brakes and massive tire clearance that allows to run the tires that fit the ride of the day. Checkpoint comes equipped with ultra-versatile 700x35c gravel tires, but we're not ones to limit ourselves, so the bike comfortably accepts tire widths from 28-45c. Checkpoint is also designed to carry and haul everything you need for an epic adventure on and off the road. Mutilple mounts for water, bags and racks give you the choice to go light and fast or all-in for multi day adventure rides.

With multiple carbon and aluminum models, as well as women's-specific options, there's a Checkpoint model perfect for everyone. Checkpoint SL models feature lightweight OCLV Carbon construction and Rear IsoSpeed for additional comport. Checkpoint ALR models feature performance and value oriented 300 Series Alpha Aluminum frame with a carbon fork.

See all Checkpoint bikes →

Image 2: Example of a cornerstone article

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Creating product pages

The second content type we'll discuss here are product pages. The most important goal of a product page is obvious: to convince your visitor to buy the product you're offering on the page. But how do you create good product pages? How can you improve your chances of converting a visitor?

Search intent and product pages

Keep in mind what we've told you about search intent. Before creating any page, you should try to find out which intent applies to your page and your keyword. You should always try to provide people with the content they expect. For instance, people visiting a blog are probably looking for information about a certain subject. Those visitors have an informational intent. This is different for an online shop. People looking for products usually have a transactional intent: they are looking to buy a product. This means that a product page should differ from an informational post on your website. Product pages should help your visitors to get the product information they need and to make them want to buy your product.

Building strong product pages

If you want to sell your products, you'll have to build strong product pages. But how do you go about that? Let's explore a few basic principles.

Basic principles

Product pages should always contain:

1. the product name;
2. a proper description of the product;
3. an image of the product;
4. the price;
5. a clear call-to-action, which brings your visitor to the cart or checkout.

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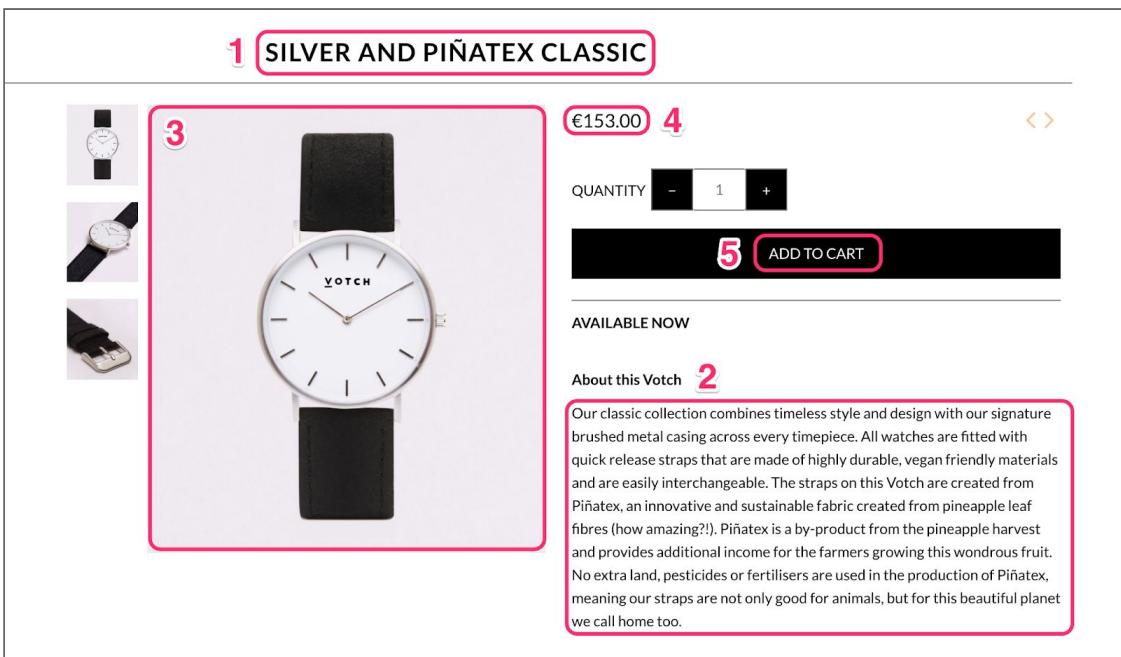
Image 3: Example of a product page with basic principles

Things that make you stand out

But let's be honest, a product page with just these basic principles isn't going to make you stand out. Most of your competitors will have these elements on their product pages as well. So how can you make your product pages stand out? Let's explore a few principles you can apply to make you stand out.

1. **Add checkmarks with your USPs**
   The first principle you could apply is adding checkmarks that state your USPs. Make sure to place them on top of your page, so your visitors can't miss them! For example, on top of the Yoast SEO plugin product page, you'll find the USPs of our plugin (see Image 4).

Yoast SEO: the #1 WordPress SEO plugin

✔ Rank higher in Google, Bing and Yahoo
✔ Let the plugin take care of all technical SEO stuff in the background
✔ Most complete SEO solution for WordPress

We walk you through every step: no need to be or hire an SEO expert.

Image 4: Checkmarks with USPs on the Yoast SEO product page

2. **Reassure your visitors**

   People like to be reassured. One of the ways to reassure people is by using testimonials from other customers or clients. It's much more effective if someone else says you're awesome than if you're claiming that yourself. For example, we have put the tweet in Image 5 on the product page of the Yoast SEO Premium plugin. We might think our plugin is awesome, but it helps a lot if an independent customer can confirm that! A reassurance can come from testimonials, but also from star ratings and reviews for products.

Image 5: Tweet we show on the product page of the Yoast SEO Premium plugin

3. **Write clear and easy-to-read copy**

   The most important factor is your copy. You should write clear and easy-to-read information. Always consider whether your text addresses the concerns and questions of your visitors. Also, don't try to include every little detail. Less can be more. Adding tables which compare products to each other can be a great idea as well.

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Making your product pages rank

Once you've optimized your product pages, you want to make them rank. But how do you make your product pages rank? There are two practices you should definitely apply here.

1. **Use the words your audience uses**
   As we've seen, using the words your audience uses is important for your SEO. Is the name of the product also the name people are looking for in the search engines? When your audience uses different words, you should think of changing the name of the product to reflect this.

2. **Optimize the page title and meta description**
   Another thing you should always do if you want your product pages to rank, is to optimize the page title and meta description of your product page. Page titles are a ranking factor, so we recommend adding the product name to the page title. Your product name should preferably be your keyword, or at least very similar to your keyword. Also, don't forget to spend some time on writing a good meta description. Meta descriptions are not a ranking factor, but can convince people to click your result. For example, adding a USP such as 'free delivery' could make people click on your result quicker.

Writing blog posts

We've covered the creation of cornerstone content and product pages. Now, we're going to go into the process of writing blog posts. Unlike product pages, blog posts almost always answer an informational search intent.

Optimize blog posts for SEO

What should you do to optimize your chances of ranking with a blog post? Years ago, it was easy to get your content ranked. Keyword stuffing was the norm, so you could mention your keywords loads of times in your article and it would probably rank within a couple of days. Luckily, those days are over. Keyword stuffing is out the door, and with it, many other

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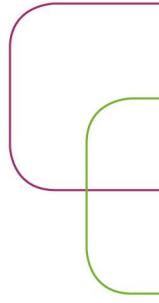
questionable techniques. Today, optimizing your blog post for SEO means something entirely different: it's your job to provide the best and most relevant piece of content for your audience.

Write for your audience

But how do you go about that? As we've seen earlier, search engines use search intent to determine what a user wants to know. Because of this, you shouldn't be writing to satisfy the search engines. You shouldn't be writing for SEO, but for your audience. This is especially true for blog posts. To make sure you're writing for your audience, ask yourself the following question:

"Does my text provide my visitors with the best possible information about the search term they entered?"

Go beyond keywords

It's also important to keep in mind that simply using your keyword is not enough. Search engines have become too smart. These days, context is one of the most important words in SEO. Yes, you need your keywords to target audiences and you need related keywords to build topics to write about. However, search engines increasingly use context to figure out what a piece of content is about and how it fits in the grand scheme of things.

This means you need to go beyond keywords and synonyms and look at the articles as a whole. Is it a clear and logically structured piece? Are there clear answers to questions your visitors might have? Is every paragraph meaningful and well-written? By answering these questions, you can make sure your content provides as much context as possible.

Tips for writing an SEO-proof blog post

There are several things you need to keep in mind if you want to write an SEO-proof blog post. Firstly, we'll list a few simple tips. Then, we'll go into a couple of tips in more detail.

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Simple tips

- Remember to check **which sites are ranking now for your keyword**: these are the competitors you must beat. Uncover why Google thinks these results are the best and improve on that.
- **Cover the topic completely** and naturally include words that are related to the topic.
- **Make it unique** by coming up with an original angle.
- Start building **trust and authority**.

Tips in more detail

In addition to the simple tips we've discussed before, we'll go into a couple of tips in more detail.

1. **Use synonyms and close variants of your keyword.**
   Search engines are becoming smarter and can recognize synonyms. You can make the topic of your article clearer by using synonyms often. So if you're selling bicycles, it's perfectly fine to use the synonym "bike" and treat both as your focus keyword. Moreover, you don't have to use an entire long tail keyphrase word for word several times in your article, if you're writing in English at least. This may work differently for less common languages.

2. **Include related questions and search phrases in your content.**
   You've probably noticed Google sometimes presents you with related search queries if you search for something. This is something you can use! Try googling your keyword and see what questions pop up. Would they fit your article? If so, by all means answer them! Answerthepublic.com could provide you with hundreds of useful related questions as well.

3. **Don't optimize different articles for one keyword.**
   It's perfectly fine to rank for multiple keywords with one article. However, you should never optimize different articles for one keyword, as you'll be competing with your own content in that case.

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4. **Structure your articles using the Inverted Pyramid Theory.**
Consider writing your articles using the Inverted Pyramid Theory. This means you start with the most important and pressing info. This helps both Google and your reader to understand your text. This is especially important on the internet: attention spans are very short. You need to grab your reader's attention. When you've convinced the reader to continue, you can go into the details and add other information.

5. **Use your keyword in the right places.**
Google pays special attention to some places in your text, and that's why you should include your keyword in these areas. You should add the keyword to the post title, URL, headers, body text, image file names, alt tags, and anchor texts. But remember: no spamming!

Conclusion

We've seen that you need to consider exactly what the searcher expects to find on a page when searching for a term – which is called search intent – and that you should line up your content with your audience's expectations – which is called content intent. Furthermore, we've discussed how to turn your keyword list into actual landing pages. We've discussed three types of website content: cornerstone content, product pages, and blog posts.

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