



How to Improve Your SEO and Drive More Traffic To Your Blog

WITH ERIC HOCHBERGER

ABOUT ERIC

Eric Hochberger co-founded Mediavine in 2004 and leads its technological and advertising initiatives.



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[00:00:07.850] - Liz Stapleton, Host

Every blogger wants to improve their SEO, but are you doing the right things that will get you found? By optimizing your keywords and giving your readers a great user experience, you too, can drive tons of traffic from Google with great SEO.

[00:00:20.270] - Liz

Hi, I'm Liz Stapleton, host of the Blogger Breakthrough Summit, and this is the podcast where I share tidbits from our Summit speakers on how to improve your blog so you can work less and earn more. In today's episode, I'm sharing some tips from Eric, the co-founder of Mediavine, on how to rank in Google using keywords.

[00:00:39.590] - Eric Hochberger

It's going to be kind of related content. How can you use related content to boost the rankings of your top performing posts? So it's really about improving rankings of your existing posts more so than anything. And it's going to focus a lot on content strategy. All right. So as Liz said, we're going to be talking about SEO today from kind of a quick crash course. At the beginning, I'm going to go over kind of my style of SEO, and then we're going to go into all the fun related keywords we are talking about and related content.

[00:01:08.150] - Eric

First, again, why is an ad guy talking about SEO? Because again, this is my background and this is Mediavine's background. Sixteen years ago, we were actually an SEO for hire firm far before we got into ads. So maybe the better question is, why is this SEO company talking to me about ads all the time? But we're definitely more of an ad management company now. But honestly, one of the biggest reasons you should listen to us is because of the Hollywood gossip.

[00:01:32.270] - Eric

So some people don't know this but Mediavine started the Hollywood Gossip in 2006. We own and operate that site, and it was at the time three guys knew nothing about celebrity gossip but knew a lot about SEO. We use those tricks to grow the Hollywood gossip into about 30 to 60 million page views a month is one of the largest gossip sites on the Internet. We still use these practices today. So the stuff I'm preaching actually works in the real world. Today's focus is mostly going to be on NOT the Hollywood gossip, though, because I don't know if that's relatable to most people that will be listening to this.

[00:02:07.610] - Eric

Instead, we're going to focus on Sugar Dish Me, which is actually a blog run by our director of publisher support, Heather. This is her own personal blog, and it's a food blog. And basically we're going to go over the strategy we did for her site, which is using Google Search console to identify some of the top keywords she's ranking for. We develop new content and linking strategies around those top ranking posts. Then she created new posts, used that linking strategy. We made a few content tweaks to the post itself.

[00:02:38.930] - Eric

We're going to follow along, and obviously it worked, or I wouldn't be using it as a case study. What's important to focus on, is not the name of the algorithm. It's what changed, right? What Google tells you to change. That's kind of my mantra. "Listen to Google, focus on good content." When Google's recommendation changes, you should change how you're doing stuff. And overall, the strategy has worked for us. We've been through so many algorithm changes over the years, and the Hollywood Gossip is still ranking well, you're going to gain some, you're going to lose some, Zoom out, keep writing good content, and just listen when Google tells you something changes.

[00:03:10.850] - Eric

All right, let's get in with it. All right. So we're going to be talking a lot about keywords today, but interestingly, I'm going to go back to the basics of what we define a keyword as, because weirdly so often I think I have a different definition of a keyword than what a lot of bloggers do. So when I say keywords, I really mean, I think key phrases or a lot of times you'll hear the industry called these as

long-tail keywords. So an example. Sorry, it's going to be very food-heavy cheesecake versus low-carb strawberry cheesecake recipe.

[00:03:42.590] - Eric

In this example, a lot of people would say cheesecake is the keyword, or strawberry is the cheesecake or even recipe. Those are not really the keywords you should be looking at. You should be looking at the whole thing as your keyword. "Low carb strawberry cheesecake recipe." That's what's called a long tail keyword. A short tail keyword is something like cheesecake. It is a bigger search, and you may think I want to go after the bigger search. That's not actually a useful search for you. We're going to tell you that the long tail is more useful for your site.

[00:04:09.350] - Eric

The reason why is it comes down to intent of the searcher. What is the reader actually looking for in cheesecake? You have no idea. Are they looking to buy cheesecake? Are they looking to figure out what cheesecake is? I have no idea what they're searching for. They're looking for pictures of cheesecake. You have no idea, but with a low carb strawberry cheesecake recipe, you know, if you're a recipe blogger, you have that for them. That is your exact user you want. They're going to be more valuable for you.

[00:04:34.430] - Eric

Sign up for your newsletter, become an engaged reader. That's going to keep coming back. So they're even better for you. Plus, the good news is there's a lot more of them. They make up about 70% of the searches on the Internet, and they're a lot easier for you to win as an independent publisher compared to the big guys who are going after the big terms. So everything we're talking about in key phrase, even though I'm going to keep saying the word keyword, key phrase.

[00:05:01.130] - Eric

All right, quick little summation on content formatting and linking. I have actually a pretty good blog post on this in the Mediavine blog so I'm going to go short into this, but write more. More is better when it comes to SEO. I like to say 300-500 words minimum. And the reason why is because the more content you're writing, the more phrases you're just going to get in there, you're going to be able to rank for more long tail keywords.

[00:05:19.310] - Eric

It won't necessarily help you with your ranking of that post itself, because Google is just looking "Are you an expert on this one particular topic?" And maybe it only takes you 100 words to do that. But if you can get more key phrases in there, there's more chances for you to rank. You're not just going for ranking on one key phrase, you might rank on other key phrases as a result of doing this. So write as much content as you can.

[00:05:40.610] - Eric

Once you start running out of things, don't start doing fluff. Nobody wants that. Certainly not Google. So if you can only answer this question 100 words, I guess stop at that point. But maybe rethink how you're writing. If you read my personal SEO blog post or any of my ad posts on the Mediavine blog, they're all over 1000 words, and I'm talking about ads. So that's not that exciting. I feel like you could probably get whatever your topic is, if you're passionate about it, 300-500 should be a minimum. And again, aim for more.

[00:06:09.110] - Eric

Always use web-friendly paragraphs. I'm obsessed with this, but I always say look at on a mobile phone. If you just do what you were taught in school, three, four, five or six sentence long paragraphs, they're going to look like a giant block of text on your phone. Break them up, hit enter more often, put photos in there. It's a more engaging experience for the user. It's super important that you have a good engaging experience.

[00:06:31.610] - Eric

Remember, Google wants to send users to a page that they're going to consume the content and

enjoy the experience. When Google sends someone to a page, they're basically recommending that page. Google looks at is their traffic, they're sending it to your site. They want that user to have a good user experience. Which is why a lot of people always say user experience kind of drives SEO.

[00:06:52.070] - Eric

And again, just like your page title, make sure you use that key phrase early on in your post. But don't stuff. I see a lot of people do this or they'll try to use that keyword throughout the entire post and they use it unnaturally.

[00:07:05.150] - Liz

Trying to get the green light in the Yoast or whatever. Yeah, don't.

[00:07:08.030] - Eric

Exactly. I'm going to bite my tongue on so many things about Yoast, but don't obsess over those lights, in general.

[00:07:14.510] - Liz

We've already covered that in other sessions. It's a good guideline, but don't obsess about it.

[00:07:19.910] - Eric

Exactly, don't stress. That is literally my mantra of all this stuff. Synonyms and related phrases are better, if anything, than using that same keyword. And when it's linking, linking is more important than your content itself. Google Judges You based on your links and that is internal and external.

[00:07:37.070] - Liz

Okay, hopefully, this episode has helped you better understand how to use long-tail keywords and your user experience to improve your SEO. Join me next time when we explore why you should run your blog as a business right from the start. I'll catch you then!