

How to plan and create evergreen content for SEO

Understanding evergreen content is important for search engine marketers and jobbing professional writers alike.

In a previous piece for Search Engine Watch, my colleague Graham Charlton covered the power of evergreen content for SEO with some comprehensive Google Analytics stats to back up his claims. This post, however, seeks to explore evergreen articles from the content creation perspective.

- How can I ensure this piece I am writing is *evergreen*?
- And how can I ensure it will help with SEO?

Nailing down your evergreen subject

Deciding on what your new piece of evergreen content is going to be about is not an exact science.

In simple terms, such articles (of course, other types of content are also available) are expected to have enduring appeal on into the future. You want your subject to be relevant in the weeks, months, and potentially years to come.

With that in mind, I think it's important not to view evergreen content as separate from things like pure news. Rather, it's better to view how potentially evergreen a piece of content is on a scale – with things like news releases at

one end, and informative pieces about the most universally enduring subjects at the other.

How-to guides and beginner's guides

How-to guides and beginner's guides are great examples of evergreen content. These are valuable educational resources, providing authority and giving the reader information to assist them in a task.

They are *evergreen* because people are always coming online to search for such resources – whether they are beginners, intermediates, or professionals.

Certain how-to or beginner's pieces will have more evergreen potential than others as the need for people to have different types of skills come and go.

For example, baking bread is a very enduring skill, especially in comparison to something like using Microsoft Excel 2016 – but a how-to or beginner's guide about Excel 2016 would certainly still be towards the evergreen end of the scale.

Other subjects have evergreen potential too

Even if the subject might appear time sensitive, a piece can still be written in such a way that it will have value down the line.

Trends pieces might on the surface seem quite short-term, but can have evergreen potential if they are looking at data over a long period of time, or if updates to the data are not expected soon. Case studies and more in-depth reflections on news events can be approached in the same way.

Curatorial pieces (such as examples of good or bad practice) might reflect on timely moments but can be given more

longevity if written in regards to the wider historical context. They may also be easy to add-to down the line. The same can be said for listicles – despite their throwaway nature.

Even seasonal pieces can come back around.

Like I said, it's not an exact science. Just because a piece of content discusses news doesn't mean it isn't evergreen. And just because something is a how-to guide doesn't mean it definitely is.

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Audience comes first, even when writing evergreen content for SEO

To quote Graham Charlton:

'If done properly, content that works for your audience can also be the content that works for search engines.'

Titles and introductions should be descriptive, rather than clickbait-y and/or stuffed with keywords.

They should be true to the content that follows.

It is typical for evergreen articles to be more in-depth and informative to your audience than things at the other end of the scale such as quick news stories or press releases which provide little more than the bottom line.

Remember, if presenting a reader with a longer piece, make use of plenty of whitespace and sub-headings to break up large

pieces of text.

Evergreen pieces may take more time to write. But in the long run they are likely to give more value to a wider audience and will provide more returns to your site.

So is it SEO-friendly?

Of course, evergreen content is great for appealing to future readers, but also good for building authority on search engines.

Best practice with title tags, URLs and image alt text should all reflect your keywords.

Internal links to other relevant pages on the same domain also point search engines to other bits of content relating to your piece – giving weight to the page you are linking out to, but also showing your piece to be part of the conversation. Of course, readers appreciate further reading too.

As we touched upon earlier, some of the best examples of enduring subjects to write about have no doubt been of interest to readers for a long time and will likely to continue to be.

Baking bread is a good example – but of course, an article titled simply: ‘How to bake bread’ is not likely to do your website any favours with search engines. The competition for that topic would be immense.

More visibility is possible, though. Exploring a niche aspect of a bigger subject is a good option for a new piece of evergreen content. For example, ‘How to bake bread without an oven’ has just as much evergreen potential as ‘How to bake bread’ and although it has a smaller potential audience, it would be far easier to rank for in the SERPs.

Exploring alternative approaches to the way a question might

be posed is another way to potentially stand out on Google.

For example, 'A beginner's guide to mixing flour, kneading dough, and making great bread' might be a worthwhile alternative to 'A beginner's guide to baking bread.' This type of headline, though wordy, will potentially appear for a greater range of search queries such as 'How to knead dough' and 'How to make great bread'.

A checklist for creating evergreen content

In the interest of ensuring that the points raised in this piece are actionable, I thought I'd sum up with a checklist:

1. Does the subject have evergreen potential?
2. Does it seek to answer a question and establish authority?
3. If it relates to news or trends, can it be written in a more evergreen way?
4. Is the title and introduction descriptive and informative for the audience?
5. If the piece is long, is it separated with white space, sub-headings, bullets and pictures?
6. Are keywords reflected in title tags, URLs, alt. text etc.?
7. Are there internal links to other articles on the same domain and do articles from the domain link back?
8. Should the piece explore a niche or does it need alternative wording in the title to stand out?

Evergreen content can require more effort than other types of content, but will ultimately pay off in the long run. The key is to take time in choosing your subject, planning your angle and potentially spending a little longer writing or creating it.

The resulting piece will not necessarily produce immediate traffic spikes and quick authority, but will be invaluable for your readers and your SEO visibility over time. Understanding how to produce evergreen content is a great additional tool in your search and content marketing kit.

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