

# Keeping Up with SEO in an Evolving Digital Marketing Era

For many digital marketers, keeping up with SEO best practices and strategies seems complicated because search engines are constantly updating and tweaking their algorithms. While it may seem that Google has been around for as long as we can remember, the search giant only rose to prominence as the leading search engine in 2002. Since then, we've seen an intricate succession of algorithm changes that have kept SEO experts on their toes.

With all this upheaval in the digital marketing landscape and the continuing complexity of SEO, it seems natural to panic. But you can acquire basic SEO knowledge and follow a few simple guidelines to help you manage a successful [digital marketing strategy](#). Even if your law firm uses an SEO agency, it's still beneficial to understand some fundamental SEO tips and tools.

## A Brief History of Google Search Rankings

Benchmark Google updates like [Panda](#) and [Penguin](#) ended the "content farm" strategy and downgraded websites using aggressive webspam. The [Hummingbird update](#) to Google's core algorithm introduced the concept of semantic search, where Google aims to deliver results by understanding user intent beyond the meanings of individual keywords and within a broader context.

Over time, Google has introduced new features to search engine results pages, like "People also ask," "Related searches," "Featured snippets," "Local map pack" and "In the news." In December 2022, Google rolled out infinite scrolling for desktops, ending the strategy of ranking on "page one." Suddenly, having your web pages rank in positions 11, 12 and 13 isn't so bad.

In February 2023, Google [announced](#) they were beta testing Google Bard, an experimental generative AI service powered by their large language model, called [LaMDA](#). While Bard has received less-than-stellar [reviews](#) from industry watchers, [Google](#) says, "Bard seeks to combine the breadth of the world's knowledge with the power, intelligence and creativity of our large language models. It draws on information from the web to provide fresh, high-quality responses." Think [ChatGPT](#) meets Google search.

## 3 Search Engine Optimization Tips

### Create High-Quality Content

Year-in, year-out and through all the disruptions in algorithm updates, one factor remains constant: Build your website with original, useful information that focuses on user intent



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versus targeting specific keywords.

Law firms frequently ask us how many new blogs they should publish a month and how often they should update their bios and practice area pages. We emphasize the importance of *quality over quantity* – it's better to publish one exceptional blog per month versus four blogs that are light on information and don't provide any value to the reader.

Additional Information:

[How to Write High-Quality Digital Content](#)

[Everything You Need to Know About Law Firm Content Marketing](#)

## Earn High-Quality Links

This doesn't mean you should hire an SEO pro to get links on low-quality legal directory sites or pay for press releases on newswire distribution services. Rather, it means undertaking a robust public relations strategy, including publishing byline articles, speaking to reporters and participating at industry events.

An earned media strategy will naturally result in other websites publishing links that point back to your website. These links will provide the best SEO value for your site. (Under no circumstances should you *ever* buy links or engage in spammy link exchanges with other websites. Google [released SpamBrain](#) in December 2022 to neutralize the impact of unnatural links.)

## Optimize for Local Search

If you have brick-and-mortar offices, you'll want to show up in search results for location-based queries so people can find your firm easily. A strategic local search strategy includes three key elements:

1. Ensuring your [Google Business Profile](#) and [Bing Places for Business](#) profile are complete and up-to-date
2. Including all NAP (name, address, phone) information clearly on your website
3. Earning links from local-based websites (news sites, Chambers of Commerce, local organizations and events, etc.)

Dumping location-based keywords into your web pages is not only a bad SEO strategy, but it also makes your content excruciating to read. Remember that web content should be written for *people*, not search engines. Nobody wants to read content that weaves in a recurring list of all the cities, counties and states where you practice.

## 3 Search Engine Optimization Tools

### Google Analytics

This free website traffic tool provides data on everything you need to know about visitors and traffic sources. With the transition from Universal Analytics to Google Analytics 4 (GA4) already rolling out, it's important to migrate your analytics to GA4 as soon as possible. Find out more about how to transition your analytics and what's new in GA4

[here](#).

As an accompaniment to Google Analytics, [Google Looker Studio](#) (formerly Data Studio) can help you build data visualizations from metrics that pull from your Google Analytics properties. Parsing the most valuable data and presenting it in easy-to-consume visualizations will help you understand and act on your data and present your findings to decision makers.

### **Google Search Console**

Another free SEO tool, [Google Search Console](#), provides reports about your website's "health," including information about indexing issues, xml sitemaps and mobile usability problems. The Core Web Vitals reports show how your web pages are performing based on real-world usage data. Google Search Console can also integrate with your Google Analytics account to provide (limited) data on keyword search queries, or what phrases people are using in Google to get to your site.

### **SEO Ranking and Backlink Platforms**

Managing a comprehensive and strategic SEO and digital marketing program usually requires access to third-party SEO tools in addition to website traffic data captured in Google Analytics and Search Console. Some of the best tools for keyword research, rank tracking, site audits, backlink profiles and competitor analysis include SEMRush, Moz, Ahrefs and Ubersuggest.

Additional Information:

[How to Conduct a Basic SEO Checkup](#)

As with any good do-it-yourself project, it's always best to have a backup professional for the more complex and serious issues you might encounter. But start with these fundamentals, and feel free to reach out to me at [mtrudeau@jaffepr.com](mailto:mtrudeau@jaffepr.com) if you have any questions.