



Google Wants Clear, Comprehensible Content

Quality standards are definitely a large part of a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy. So, what do you do to boost the quality of technical or speciality legal content? It can be a struggle to aim your writing well. With more complex topics, should you target a higher reading and comprehension level or handle only ideas so that anyone can follow?

If content is too complex, most readers click away or check an online reference source to try and understand (and technical online reference sources may compound the problem). If the path to useful comprehension is not clear, your readers will navigate elsewhere, costing your firm potential clients. At the same time, overly general, obvious content offers nothing new and robs you of the opportunity to share your expertise. In short, balance is needed.

In a recent webmaster help video, Google's Matt Cutts pointed to a need and desire for clear, approachable content in all but the most speciality situations. Readers, he said, want someone to "explain it to me like I'm a 5-year-old."

By Cutts' definition, "5-year-old" content focuses on simplification, not patronization. Cutts argued that if writers cannot explain a complex topic in clear, understandable terms (without walls of detail or jargon), then they may not fully understand the material themselves. High-quality specialized content offers readers a complete, attractive "5-year-old" understanding of the topic, then guides them to the terminology and in-depth considerations they need to expand that understanding.

Balance your web content, blogs and news releases to support and guide visitors. All readers will benefit if you can explain your basic point clearly and directly. Make sure to offer full explanation for any legalese or technical information you need. Sometimes, you may even wish to write two pieces with two styles of content — one for speciality readers (other attorneys), and one for beginners (potential clients) — to address a concept fully.

No matter the depth of your ideas, make sure to keep your approach simple.

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