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WEBVTT

LEXI MOSTEK: all right, as important as my job as Dj. Is. We're actually here to talk about SEO for the third day. Happy Thursday. Thanks to everyone that is joining new today, and everyone that has been part of the series on yesterday, where we talked about practical SEO and Tuesday, where we talked about specialized markets. Today is Thursday, part 3 on technical SEO

And just as a reminder, if you weren't able to catch the previous days, or you've got to jump out of here early or want to go back and listen to everything. We are recording everything. All 3 of these webinars, and we will post them to our resources page as well as if you're registered for any part of the series. We will be sending out an email later on, today or tomorrow, depending on what time zone you're in where you can get the recordings. That being said, enough of me for the week. please, if you have any questions, feel free to throw them in the chat, or in the question and answer feature in zoom.

I am going to pass this over to Erin and I don't know why your name says Vital. So I apologize on the typo there. copying slides. But, Erin, if you want to take it away, I will fix screen.

ERIN MYERS: Not a typo that's my married name. Let's see.

LEXI MOSTEK: So I'm so sorry I did not know that.

ERIN MYERS:

Hi again, everyone. Good afternoon or good evening, depending on where you are in the world. My name is Erin Myers get all, and I have been at WP Engine for a little over 3 years, working as the lead SEO and digital strategy manager.

So just like in our other 3 webinars. We have a new panel of participants in a fresh topic for you today. Technical SEO, one of my favorites. Before we get into that discussion, Miranda and Steffan, we have 2 of the very best technical SEO experts that I've had the pleasure of working with on the panel today. I would love to have you go ahead and introduce yourself, your company and your role. And then, as a little bit of an icebreaker, complete this sentence if you could for me.

Technical SEO is a little tricky, because ____, but what makes it fun is ____.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: awesome. Well, hello, everybody! And my name is Steffan Hernandez. I am based out of Las Vegas, Nevada. I'm an associate director of SEO at Power Digital Marketing, which is a full service Digital marketing firm based out of San Diego. We have a distributed team internationally, and offices all over the country.

My particular role as an associate director, as I manage the technical SEO team here, where we help our team and our clients with all things technical SEO related from website crawl audits to core web vitals, consulting through migrations, schema, markup, etc.

And to answer your question, technical SEO is a little tricky because it does require a firm understanding of how Google and other search engines crawl and index content from websites. But what makes it fun is it forces you to stay Curious. And I think that is one of the biggest traits that any SEO can have in this space is you have to stay curious if you want to stay ahead.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Hi, everyone. My name is Miranda. I've been working in SEO for the last 15 years. I'm based in Dubai, working as a WP Organic Performance at Monster. I also have my own agency for which I built the websites and I do technical SEO, besides other aspects of SEO. And I'm also doing a masters in software engineering.

And to answer your question about the challenging part of technical SEO, it's basically especially if you make like very large changes, you cannot do it alone. So you also are dependent on engineering teams. but the fun is actually that when you get things together, it's like, really a team efforts. And you can really make some big impact based on it.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, so true, I think that WP Engine when we're talking about making technical changes to the website. We're often collaborating across the Wordpress development team, the website strategy team, brand, communications and oftentimes even some external resources where we've worked with PDM in the past and Miranda more recently, so could not be more true. Or we're better said, I love it. We will get right into the questions.

I think something that I've been thinking about lately and some of the questions even getting from our audience do pertain to the fact that, you know there is a really common misconception about technical SEO, which is, if you do a site crawl once and you correct all of the errors. Once your site is good to go. I'm hoping that you could both speak to why that is actually not the case.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: So one thing is that even if you fix the site, a lot of things are happening after that. So especially like in larger companies, multiple persons are working on the same site. So it's important to keep track of is everything still working properly? And besides, the things on your side to Google is also making updates. So you need to keep working on a technical SEO to make sure that the website is in line with the Google recommendations.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, to echo what Miranda said, especially for websites that have a lot of moving parts, lots of teams deploying changes, adding content, you know, really a dynamic website.

It's always good to constantly keep an eye on technical SEO. You know, doing more frequent calls just to make sure that you know mistakes can happen. We're all humans, and oftentimes those mistakes can sometimes bring down your rankings or cause some fluctuations there. So it's always good to keep it a keen eye on things when there's lots of changes happening on your website, especially for multiple teams that may not be communicating with each other as frequently, or really have a full understanding of what's going on, and not to say that everything has to funnel through SEO first, but oftentimes it can be helpful.

ERIN MYERS: On that note. How often are you both doing technical health assessments or website calls of the of the properties that you manage?

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: That's a good question. I would say, depending on the website and the need, you know, if it's a really fast moving website, at least quarterly, as what we would, we would recommend with clients that we work. With those we have a lot of close communication with. If we can get, you know, updated ahead of time. Like, we're gonna deploy this change. Or we're gonna make these updates to the product side of things that might affect SEO.

You know, we'd like to, of course, get involved prior to. But if it's something that we, you know, do on like a quarterly basis and prioritize whatever could be issues or recommendations there, I would say, that's probably the normal cadence of what we would recommend.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: and also in addition to that like especially in a quarter it's good for the overall roadmap. So from the bigger picture and the improvements that you want to make and more from like a day to day, making sure that the site is working properly. It's good to have like a crawl schedule that if something goes wrong or breaks something on your website, that you get alerted so you can take action fast.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, we'll get a little bit more into alerts, and how to monitor your site here later. But for now I want to dig in a little bit more on the topic of website crawls, I think, a lot of our audiences in the nitty gritty SEO tech. And so when you have a long list of redirects, broken links, missing metadata to clean up. How do you prioritize what to tackle first?

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: That's always a great question, too. So when we perform call audits or our website audits like this, we always try to assess the relative importance of what an issue would be for that particular site.

You know, do, for example, if you go through your checklist of, you know, 404s. Broken links, missing meta descriptions, things like that, you can't always just stack rank, those based on a checklist. You have to think about the volume of issues that that particular website might have in

those categories. And then look at what is going to make the greatest impact. You know. Obviously, things like having missing Meta descriptions could be deemed as bad, but maybe not as bad as the hundreds of URLs that are missing a canonical tag which could be causing duplicate content or the same thing with like broken internal links, you know, having internal 404s. Or other, you know, internal broken link errors is considered bad. But if there are several of your you know key core pages that are missing title tag elements that are rendering properly. That might be a bigger impact item than just running through a checklist and trying to prioritize, based on, you know, what we think is an issue.

And of course, you know, sometimes you might have a lot of internal 404 s. That could be really bad. Some of those 404 pages might be receiving backlinks that you want to, either, you know, fix those pages because maybe they shouldn't be 404s, or they're gone forever. We want to redirect that. So we can kind of reclaim some of that link equity.

We try to assess it, based on, like the impact it's going to have on that site, and then oftentimes to like our clients that are implementing our recommendations. Ask us, what is the general level of effort, which can always be the difficult question to answer. But we try to rank it in a way that it's going to be the most impactful based on their time and resources needed to actually implement those items.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Yeah, I would say the same, especially with your last sentence like what is the impact on revenue? And what is the effort that it takes to get it enabled. It's also good to be aware of that certain changes you cannot do only by yourself. So that's especially when you need other teams I could take. It takes a bit of time. So the earlier you alert them and get them into the project the faster you can get things live.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, absolutely. hitting again on that importance of collaborating across teams when when working on a large website, especially on that note, too, I'm really curious. So when you're managing a website like Monster or Steffan, I know you work on some really big accounts as well, I won't mention any of them for the sake of privacy. But, what do the typical team structure for a technical health assessment and implementation look like for one of your average customers, I think, on this call we might have some you know, loan wolfs running SEO for an agency, or independently for smaller start up companies. So I'd love to hear you to just talk through resourcing and what you seem to be an effective structure.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: So it really depends on the size of the company, because in a smaller company there are less layers. So it can sometimes be a bit more efficient to speak directly with the developers. but often teams which are very important are like product teams, because they often decide the roadmap, the engineering team and the developers because they are implementing the solution. So I would say that those 2, and of course the SEO team are very important.

Yeah, would mainly like to product and engineering. Those are at least from a technical point of view, are very important stakeholders.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I'd agree with that, too. I mean oftentimes, if we go to present our recommendations through an audit, or whatever else we, were speaking to marketing teams. But we'd like to have dev engineering teams on the call as well, especially if there's any questions when it comes to: implementation. Teams sometimes the clients that have, like internal dev and engineering teams, are often the easiest to work with, because there's a lot of internal communication there. But it's not to say that clients that have, you know, external dev teams aren't also easy to work with. I think you know, in our experience the end goal is not just to give you a deliverable that says, here's all the issues or opportunities that you have related to technical SEO on your site. But it's actually getting them to become implemented. Otherwise all that work is for not.

And so we, you know, we try to make the documentation and the collaboration communication as effective as possible to ensure that the end goal is actually meant. Like, we do have these items implemented. And if we need to make compromises along the way due to technical limitations, or whatever it may be, we try to stay in communication with those teams that are actually implementing. So really depending on your company structure and not that's our end goal is to speak to the right people and just make sure there's an open line of communication, especially when it comes to. You know questions about recommendations, how to do something, or if there's compromises that need to be made, you know, we can help consult through that to the end.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, because the initial crawl and discovering the issues that need to be resolved is one thing, but then actually going in and implementing that is a whole other beast. And then monitoring the effect of those changes comes third obviously, so, all 3 really important components. And I think, as an SEO, the dream really is to have a dedicated wordpress developer handy to make those technical implementations as needed, but also great when you have a big team to call on and collaborate with, too.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: Another thing that we run into sometimes is, we might have a larger recommendation, or perhaps an opportunity that we suggest that could help with growth, maybe not specifically just checking the boxes of technical SEO and you know what is important and what's not. But let's say we propose something that is an opportunity or: perhaps there is a big issue, and the client comes back and says, you know, we don't have the resources or capability of doing this right now, for whatever reason, what is the impact if we don't do this?

And I think that's another, you know, important component of technical SEO is, there's opportunities. And there's sometimes issues where it's not worth the time or resources that you may have at the moment. What is this doing for us right now? Is this holding us back? Is there, you know, a big opportunity cost here? If we don't spend more time in resources to try and accomplish X or whatever the issue is. And you know that's another thing that we help work with our clients a lot, too, because you know, their internal resources or external resources may be stacked. They might need to put things off, you know. What are they risking if there's certain issues or recommendations that they can't get to immediately? And you know, working towards

plans and solutions to help with that is often where we get a lot of good feedback and these sorts of things. And you know, sometimes you can't tackle everything. Every website is different. The technology power beyond that website can be different. so there's oftentimes a lot of compromises and things. But you know, it's nice to help a client. Or have you even understand, you know, what is the potential impact that you could have if you don't act upon something, or is it going to be, you know, something that's totally fine and and focus on other things that could be, you know better towards growth and growing your business.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, great, great point. Steffan!

Alright transitioning a little here. A question I love to ask is, what are you both doing? Currently to improve SEO rank for the sites that you manage? Feel free to focus on one in particular, or, more broadly, if that makes sense, however, how you'd like to answer that question.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: That's also a great question. I think one thing that for one of our clients we're doing right now is not so much like fixing issues and errors. But looking at the website from a technical perspective and thinking about how could we create more indexable pages from an event calendar system that this client has. Their sole goal is ticket purchases and affiliate ticket revenue. And we look at keyword research, and we see that a lot of people are searching for concerts in, say, X city today, this week, this month, this weekend, and the current calendar system we had on this website didn't really allow you to generate an indexable page with those specific filters. It was basically just concerts in X City.

So I'm based in Las Vegas. So, for example, concerts in Las Vegas. While you could filter today this week, this month, based on the navigation and the URLs that were generated there. They were all canonicalizing back to just the main concerts in city right? And so, after looking at keyword research and saying that we could probably target a lot more long tail specific phrases, not just by, like a date time frame, but also by genre. So they would have, like rock R&B, hip hop, etc., probably about 15 to 18 total genres.

And we could also specifically have a page index for rock concerts in Las Vegas. But we couldn't have longer tail phrases with date, base or rock concerts in Las Vegas this weekend. And so, after looking at, you know, website crawls, and seeing that all of these URLs that were being crawled but canonicalized back to a page that was just the root page. We saw this as an opportunity to kind of grow our keyword landscape.

And we worked with the Devin engineering teams. We came up with a lot of the different logic, for lack of a term that we would have to implement to make sure that our canonical tags were still intact and doing what they're supposed to do by preventing duplicate content. But also allowing us to have newly indexable pages that would allow us to rank for a whole plethora of keywords that we weren't able to before. And I think that's one thing about technical SEO that is often overlooked, and not to say that any SEO couldn't really assess a situation like that and

find the opportunity. But by looking for issues and errors with things like canonicalization, we did find a huge key opportunity for this particular website.

And since implementing that, and probably about a month ago. We've seen 200% growth in that particular side of the site, and it was all content that we had there already. It just wasn't indexable. And of course, you know, we looked at metadata optimizations and how we can string together the key terms and the navigation filters and things like that. To make this all dynamic. This particular website has cities internationally all over the world. So it was kind of bolting on thousands and thousands of pages just by looking at that particular logic. And it's been a huge success factor for us. And so that's one probably big recent thing that I can say to answer your question.

ERIN MYERS: yeah, what a great nugget of information. Thank you for sharing that, Steffan. I think everybody probably found that very, very interesting and helpful. to consider if they're not already thinking about long tail keyword opportunities in that way, Miranda. How about you?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: There actually like 3 large areas where I'm currently working on.

One is from a technical perspective, instead of like just optimizing the site that we currently have, go back to the drawing table and see like, how can we build something which is more efficient and more wider reach more unique pages. So I cannot go too much in detail, but it's a like from a side hierarchy perspective, and efficiency that's a very large project.

The other thing is to improve the indexation from or the accessibility actually from Urls to make sure that all of our Urls are indexing for all by Google, so doing a lot of validation with, look files and see is Google able to access all the Urls we have on the site. Or do you mean to make certain changes?

And the other aspect is around international SEO, like how we make sure that all our sites are ranking across all markets and are not kind of cannibalizing each other. So we're looking into ways like, how can we automate the href so they are not dependent on human action, because especially if you have like websites operating in 30-50 countries, the href language tags only work when they are referring to each other as that's why it's the best way to automate. To make sure that there's no possibility for human error into the setup. So those are basically 3 large projects I'm currently working on.

ERIN MYERS: All right. Good stuff, transitioning a little here into a different, a different set of questions. thank you both for those very thoughtful answers. We're gonna talk about everybody's favorite topic, Google's core algorithm updates.

So on March 15th, we had the latest Google core algorithm update. We've had rumors recently of another one soon to come. How has the core algorithm updates from this year impacted to the site you manage? And how are you responding to those changes for your customers or the site that you manage?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: We actually men noticed that across the jobs industry that a lot of websites were impacted. so likely Google has changed something in the way like how it's presenting jobs. So we actually noticed quite some impact, after that update, which is very annoying, of course, because you're working on your strategy. And then suddenly, like, there's no announcement suddenly that goes to the updates. And you see your performance like fluctuating. So it's like, okay, So it's all forces like, what has been impacted by Google, why is it being impacted? What can we do to improve it? So we had, like a an urgency project in between to tackle the impact of the core update.

But yeah, especially the one in March. That was quite considerable for the jobs industry.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: I think, with the clients that I manage. You know, we saw some fluctuations there, but I wouldn't say like we were greatly impacted. We saw maybe some growth in some clients and and other clients maybe still kind of remain the same.

But you know, there's also the thing to you with core algorithm updates specifically and Google has said this time and time again, there's no specific action that you can or should take following a core algorithm update. And when we have other algorithm updates like you know, product review updates things like that. There might be some more specific action that you could take following an update like that, like implementing features, schema, types, stuff like that that you didn't have before. But with the core algorithm update, you're kind of like, all right, this is what I get. And you know, hopefully, we were doing all the right things right. And we'll just continue to do all the right things and see how that impacts, which is obviously for SEO's, especially SEO, has been in this industry for a long time extremely frustrating. You know, we always see an algorithm happen, and maybe our site gets hit in a very negative way.

And it's, you know, complete reactive scramble to try and fix an issue. And let's say you did identify a big issue around that time, and you do fix it. There's still no guarantee that that's going to help you recover after a core algorithm update. So I think, you know, with SEO in general, it's just consistently doing, you know, good work and consistently making sure that your website can be crawled and indexed correctly. You're creating good content. It is really the best recommendation you can get in as many ways as you want to spin it. Google comes back with the same answer. You know, there's nothing specific that you can do here. It's just, you know, could continue to create good content and can continue to make sure that your websites are crawlable and and your content is renderable and indexable. And and and you should just be fine.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Yeah, and maybe just as a context, if you follow that path. So if you really focus on the user, generate great content. really like, have a website basically to be proud of like really doing the good things. Then you see, you benefit from core updates. So that's why. Usually, if you follow an approach, you're quite safe.

So and also in the Google guidelines Google mentioned, like, it, not necessarily to do something wrong. It's just other things are being valued more. And that's why certain websites can have the impact of the core update. I do always find it very interesting, like, what is then being hit so to get an understanding. What are the things that Google's now values more instead of less. To make sure like what should we then strive for that like, normally, if you always follow focus on quality, you're on the safe path. But still it can be that. Yeah, Google, it's value in particular things more. And it's good to know what it is. So you can also make sure that you incorporate it.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, yeah. So safe to say, Google, core algorithm updates tend to be a bit ambiguous. It doesn't necessarily result in a checklist of things that you need to go do. However, if you're doing the right thing, producing quality content, following technical best practices for your website and thinking of the user first, then you'll probably be in pretty okay shape.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: That's the hope, right, you know. Sometimes, like these landscapes change to where it's not so much you dropped in rankings, and therefore maybe you're not seeing the same amount of traffic you used to, especially after say, Google is introducing a new serp feature, and I'd imagine, like the event space and the job space. You know the featured snippet that shows a list of jobs or events that has evolved over the years, numerous times and for websites that aren't able to compete in some of those certain features that are, you know, predominant at the top of the search results oftentimes or maybe that's what they're striving to get into is a good focus.

And so when you see that the landscape has changed like even introducing the people also asks sections or other rich snippet features that might be pushing content further down page one results. Even with like products and merchant listings organic and and both paid. When you look at how, over the last, even just decade, the landscape has changed from just 10 blue links, and maybe a local pack. To all of these new features and the search results, it is, it can be difficult to compete. And so, you know, with technical SEO specifically, you try to look at opportunities to where you can be featured in some of these SERP features, whether that's in, you know, introducing Schema Markup or improving your existing schema markup or content structure things like that.

It's kind of just adapting to what the landscape is. And you know, Google is constantly changing these things. And so and that's a way I look at it especially from like a technical perspective is like, is there something in the technical SEO realm that we could do to improve or introduce to a site so that they can be featured in these different sections, on, on, on the search results. And if not, then it's in some cases like setting expectations with the client like, you know, it's not the way things used to be. So yeah, you might see the same amount of impressions, but a decrease click through rate.

But it's because users now have a lot of other rich experiences in the search results to be able to click through and find the content or information or products that they're searching for. And it's not just, you know, the blue links anymore per se. You know these, we used to call them it. So I

think just kind of adapting to that, and figuring out other ways that you can win and be visible in those spaces, especially with, you know, queries that have a lot of serp features on page one.

You really have to kind of figure out how to adapt and find your place where you're gonna get the highest visibility and chances to increase your click through right, especially if you're already ranking.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Yeah. And I, I would say, that's also particularly interesting with the search generative experience which is coming up probably by the end of the year, because it will also have, like a large impact, probably on impressions versus clicks. Because then they had welcome above the SEO results. and to be like a more personalized experience based on what users search for. And then they can click within this new feature from from Google that they're working on so that they will also have, yeah, likely a large impact on figures.

ERIN MYERS: on the note of search generative experience. That's a new one. That's a hot topic in the SEO tech world. How are you preparing your customers for the onset of the Sg?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: So we're telling about that it's coming that they know that they can expect some fluctuations at the moment. It's still very early to see what the impact is. So very likely it will push the SEO results down. but at least in the coco labs, you can see that they are linking out to articles. They are showing product links.

So that's why it's not necessary that it's like SEO traffic will potentially decline because they're still being linked from within this search generative experience. That's why I think it would be a bit too early to say like this is what will happen, but at least it's good to make the clients aware that this is coming, and this can have an impact on figures .But it's still a bit unclear what that will be.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah. The same thing over here right now. We're starting to educate our clients on SGE, and what it is and sort of what to expect. I mean, even a lot of us in the SEO space don't really know exactly what to expect when it fully rolls out. But you know, I think on our side, the agent side, it's important to, you know, inform our clients of these things that are coming out, how it might have a potential impact.

And more specifically, to even just looking at, you know, the current sort of landscape will show examples of queries related to keywords that we're trying to go after for that particular client to see what the results tend to look like. And then, even if right now, maybe our clients' results happen to be generated in those in, in those queries. And in some cases, you know, if it's very transactional, or a related query or very informational query. And if you've done enough work in Sg, right now, you kind of see, there's a lot of variations to that. And of course, that's going to change over the next several months. So really, just education.

And then on the SEO side of things to trying to come up with ways that we might be able to optimize the websites to help appear in SGE results better. Right now, of course, there is no particular playbook or or particular set of instructions, at least, that I'm aware of that Google has said, this is how you can get into SGE results, and they're probably going to come back and say, You know, just continue to do all the right things that we've said all along. I mean, these are AI generated results, and they will be personalized.

So I think I'm really curious to see, like how we might be able to attribute in like search console reports. For example, you know, are they going to show us a report that this impression was made through Sge? Or these clicks are made through Sge. Versus the regular search results. And I think once, if we have the opportunity to kind of see that data, you know, our clients are going to be very curious about it, and see how often that's even used, and where they might be getting results from that.

So I think there's so a lot of unknowns. But it's obviously exciting. maybe extremely frustrating for some in a lot of ways, because, you know, it's just other things to push down the organic search results that you know we have been trying to accomplish for long time, but, you know there obviously best practices that I'm sure you can continue to do that will help you see results in sge. But specific things that maybe you can do. It's very unclear right now, but you know, of course, you're staying on top of that, and then being able to, you know, hack upon that on behalf of your clients and educating our clients is the goal.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah. Well, said, preparation is key, but this one will have to keep our eye on it and see what happens.

All right, shifting a bit here. What are some of the essential tools in your tech stack? And can you briefly touch on how you use each one, are they free or paid? I'll pause there, and whoever wants to take that first can hop right in.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: So the one which I find very important is, of course, like a sitecrawler and then often combined with the look for analysis. So I find the combination the most interesting, because, on one hand, I can see what are the, if there's any errors or things on the website that we need to improve. But also are these pages visited by Google, both. So that's why any tools that have this combination as [Botify](#) or [OnCrawl](#), I find very, very well valuable. That's from like the crawling and auditing perspective.

And then, of course, like for SEO rankings there are a lot of tools out there with [conductor](#), [Moz](#), like that's also very important.

And there's so many tools. But I also leave the floor to Steffan in there any.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: There's lots of site crawlers out there. I'm personally a [Screaming Frog](#) Fanboy. I've been using Screaming Frog ever since I started SEO 12 years ago, but you know, oftentimes you might come across big enterprise websites for screaming frog is just not

enough juice, so [Botify](#), DeepCrawler now [Lumar](#), [OnCrawl](#). These are all great, you know, tools that they can certainly help with like larger enterprise level websites. Of course, Google Search Console. I also use [SEMRush](#) and [ahrefs](#) for other types of analysis.

For page speed or core web vitals, obviously [lighthouse](#) in chrome is good. I like [webpagetest.org](#), [GTMetrix](#). They have a lot better expanded views on how you might be able to, you know, pass off recommendations to dev teams and look at waterfall reports.

That's kind of like the typical stack. But I'm kind of tool agnostic. Whatever is needed to get the job done. I don't have you know any preference or anything specifically. But I'd say, like, that's my go to toolbox.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Yeah, it's basically for the purpose. So like one is like auditing when it's like keeping track of performance. And I mean, in those types you have, like so many tools available.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, definitely, no shortage of different tools to choose from, but it's always good to hear what different SEO's are keeping there and dear to their heart or favorited in their browser.

Which, on that note, Chrome extensions. How about those? Any chrome extensions that you're really loving, or finding yourself clicking on every day?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: The ones I almost use every day, like [SEO Meta in 1 Click](#), [Seerobots](#), open pages in multiple tabs, very handy if I do a review.

Oh, Also very interesting, like [Oscrapaper](#). So if you have the Google results and then you can basically scrape the results and get all the URLs from that page. So usually when I do that, I set the Google results to 100. So I see 100 results on base for certain query. And I use, [Oscrapaper](#), and I get all the websites that are ranking for that keywords. So it helps a lot with research.

And then, of course, like web developer tools which is a very interesting one, [Redirect Path](#). So, yeah, a lot.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, same thing. I use quite a few, but I try not to stack my address bar with every extension out there. I use a lot of bookmarklets, actually, because they're just super lightweight. And sometimes I just need something quick. I have to check out [Oscrapaper](#). I use a bookmarklet that just kind of scrapes the search results, and those in a new tab in a plain text setting so I could throw it in a crawl or throw it in a spreadsheet.

But I would say some of my most go-to's that I get like a lot of questions on like, "Hey, what is that extension?" [Link redirect trace](#) from link research tools is one of my favorite. So if you know that a URL has gone through several redirects, or, you know, 301s 302s 07s. Whatever it may

be, it could quickly show you what that trace was. [SEO meta in 1 click](#) is always great too. And then other extensions that may not be typically SEO related you know what not.

But I use a lot of bookmarklets. Some of which I just found on like articles on the web, or after kind of dissecting the Javascript behind them made my own. So even if I'm on a page, I like to see if the pages index you can click on a bookmarklet it'll open up a Google search result with the site operator right in front of it. You could see that, things like that. And it's a little bit more lightweight on my browser.

So you know, if I could throw it in a bookmarklet and do the same thing that an extension might with a less memory usage. I'll try to do that first.

ERIN MYERS: Hey? Bookmarklets for the win. Are these free tools, or are these paid tools? I know some of those that you've touched on like Conductor, SEMrush, Screaming Frog are definitely paid, ahrefs definitely paid. Could you just note some that might be free to use for those operating on it on a lean budget in the crowd?

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: I think you could probably get away with a lot of these types of extensions in the free version, and you know, of course, if you already subscribe to that product, then signing into that book, or signing into that extension can help. But I haven't really ran across an extension that I was like, oh, I absolutely need the paid version here to do the level of work that I needed at, to be honest. And if we had an account with that particular extension signing in yeah, great whatever.

But even then I think a lot of the free versions of these. You could get out of it exactly what you need.

ERIN MYERS: Cool. Love it. Free tools for the win. WP Engine we are fan of open source, and so we are always happy to find additional free chrome extensions and other tools to add to our bookmarks menu.

ERIN MYERS: All right. Pivoting here a little bit, at WP Engine we recommend a quarterly technical health assessment of our site. I'm curious to know how do you measure success? Following the implementation of the work? And beyond Google search console and Google analytics, are there any other reporting tools that you recommend.

I was gonna keep asking a 2 part of that question, but I will stop there and then ask a follow up instead. Don't mind my awkwardness. Y'all.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: it's all good. Miranda, do you want to take that one?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Hmm! I was thinking that one thing is like, first of all, you need to know, like, when things are being implemented. So especially if there's a certain release date it's very

handy to know. Okay, that's the date that I keep monitoring and see if there's any like impact from the many SEO work what we have done. Usually SEO takes a bit of time. So the you see, like, especially when we did, for example, like large side migrations, we saw the SEO impact coming from 2 to 3 weeks.

So that would be like the early signal that something is working. but of course, sometimes it will take longer. so basically rankings traffic those would be like the kind of things I would look into. And then based on like. So I used to keep track like a that was when a certain thing went live. And then I go back like one month to month later to see do I see an impact based on the thing that went live.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: I would say. I know you said beyond search console and analytics. But I think if you're looking at implementing a certain recommendation or implementing a certain fix. You kind of want to monitor, search, console, to see if the keywords that might be impacted from the pages affected in that, are you seeing an increase in impressions? Are you seeing an increase in clicks that sort of thing? And of course, if you're monitoring keyword rankings like specifically like a specific list of keywords tracking that on a daily weekly basis, whatever it may be to see if you're actually improving in rankings there is going to be a key factor to success.

However, you monitor rankings, whether, even if you're looking at just like the third party databases and SEMrush and ahrefs. Are you starting to see a lift in? You know certain sections of your site where those recommendations may have been impacted where you can actually start to see some signals and then analytics. Of course, you know, the whole goal of getting traffic from our organic search is to be able to rank in positions that can actually produce clicks.

So you know, if you're cutting for page one, or you're looking at striking distance keywords like, what tools you use right now. It's really just kind of how you set up the measurement. And, like Miranda, said to you like, when these actual implementations took effect. How long you think it might take for Google to recrawl the site or the section of the site, or however many Urls that might have been impacted could be a factor there.

But I also think, too like, especially if it's something, if a recommendation that you implemented is very specific to a certain section of your website or a certain you know, group of keywords that you're trying to target, setting that up beforehand. So you can kind of benchmark against what the implementation might have produced for you. Obviously, everyone's hoping that it's going to improve results. But if it's all stay flat or start to decline, then, you know, sort of a timeline there. If there is something that needs to be fixed with the implementation. I think it's always great to just set yourself up with the benchmark, especially if you're implementing anything like significant, whether it's site wide or across a group of your, you know, core pillar pages that way, you can really tell if that was impactful or not.

And then also to if that's an effort that maybe you need to double down on in different sections of your site, and you can kind of use that as sort of a case study to say, Hey, we did this work

here. We want to continue to do this work and other sections of our site and and scale out that process.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: You touched on a very important part as well, and the SEO said also to be able to communicate back about the impact because it's not only for your own work, you can see. Okay, this is effective. So we need to continue with this kind of work. But it's also important to communicate back to management: like this is the thing that we achieve with this work. So also for your next year's SEO budget, that you have enough budget available to keep on doing your SEO work, because sometimes it can be that you're too focused in your SEO work. You're getting great results, but you're not communicating them. So leadership doesn't know that you're doing all these great things. Thanks to your SEO work.

That's why it's also really important to make sure that you have measurement set up. And when you things implement over here that you're able to track it. So if you can also present your success stories, and make sure you keep your budget allocation for next year.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, keep a win folder. If you don't screenshot the wins. keep a changelog if you don't have one or another thing I really like to do is notate whenever we make a big change in Google analytics or Quattr, that way as we're reporting and getting a look back at the previous quarters work, we can say, okay, after we cleaned up these redirects after we implemented these new Meta descriptions, here is the positive impact that we saw, or sometimes the negative impact that we saw as a result of the work that we did here. Not always rainbows and butterflies and technical SEO.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I know for sure. It's one thing to report on all of the activities that you've done for your client, or even for yourself. Right? But then it's another thing to look at, like what was the measurement and effect of those activities or those specific projects? And is it something that you know was the goal that, was the goal achieved because you need to invest more resources into and and really seeing proactive and really business minded in that sense versus just, hey, I'm checking all the boxes like I'm doing. SEO. But are you doing SEO in a way that's meaningful and impactful for the business?

And then, of course, if there's a lot of stakeholders involved. What is the story that they're gonna want to hear? And how you can start to prepare those stories. Now, what you're doing this work, and when the time comes for a report or Quarterly Review, whatever it may be, you're already armed with like, okay, this is what the state looked like prior to these recommendations being implemented. Here's where we are now. You know, this was a win. Or maybe we need more resources to continue on the momentum that we're on. I think you know, thinking about that now and setting yourself up for success is really going to help you, you know. Continue to get the resources that you need to do that type of work, or, you know, additional budget, if necessary.

If stakeholders aren't very sure like what those activities are producing in terms of business value or revenue, then it's going to be a hard decision for them to make to continue to give you the resources or budget, you might need to execute work.

ERIN MYERS: Yup. Pausing in case, Miranda, you have anything else to have.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: No, I fully agree.

ERIN MYERS: Okay, cool. If not You both touched on a lot of the positive signals that you could look for alternatively. What are some of the red flags that you that you look for when you're working on a website, things to be wary of?

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: red flags, I think in the recent year, any Javascript framework like headless Cms is something that I'll typically say, Okay, well, we'll probably find a lot of issues or opportunities for these types of websites. Obviously, you know, frameworks like react, and and and so on and so forth. They're not going away anytime soon, but they can be incredibly difficult for SEO. They're getting a lot better, I would say, like before I take on a project, understanding like what the actual Cms or the tech stack is, is typically like the first red flag. And then that way, I know how to approach perhaps crawling that website, or very specific things that I see commonly on different types of framework that I need to, you know, be cognizant of when I'm looking for issues.

You know, every website is obviously built differently and things like that. But that's where I would kind of initially assess, how do I even approach auditing a website, understanding the tech stack? And you know what other components of the website there, there might be other subdomains with different Cms's, are there, you know? Perhaps so a wordpress blog installed on a sub folder on top of a e-commerce platform like things like that you might need to just understand, so that when you go and crawl through the side, you know how to provide recommendations that might be specific to different environments or whatever the website may be comprised of is what I'll typically look out for first

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: and I think it's also important to understand, if you are an agency or a freelancer and you're getting a new client like, what is their resources or capacity to make changes, because otherwise, like, you do like a very full audit. And then they say, Yeah, sorry we use a platform that we can't edit or something. So it's like you spend a lot of time, but it cannot be implemented

So it's like, ha! Client is not happy because they don't see all the impact. You spend a lot of time and it won't be it cant be implemented. So it's quite frustrating. So I think, understanding. before you start your audit your audits understanding. What is the capacity to get things implemented? The flexibility the resources that they have. So I think that, is an important question to ask.

And then in terms of like because one of like red flags. I think. it's in terms of like, it's more the alerting perspective, like, basically, if something happens that, you get very quickly alerted. So you can also take action very quickly. So Google alerts, or if you have, like a site crawler, set up certain things like If your traffic drops with so much percent day of day, or something or week over week, that at least you get alerted. So you can also take fast action.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, good ones, great, great answers. And, Miranda, you actually segwayed very nicely into my next question, which is. when there are multiple people on a team making changes to a website. You're going to naturally run into issues from time to time like, an important page getting no index. Let's hope not. But it's happened to the best of us.

How do you monitor this for your clients like to your point? Do you set up Google alerts? Or are there any other website monitoring tools that really help as a safety net here?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: So I try to, both on the before it goes live to make sure there's an SEO validation check before it gets implemented. So if stories are being developed and it's ready for Qa that SEO also refuse it to make sure that before anything push live like it's SEO friendly.

And then If there's like an SEO release date that would be very handy. So normally, it's like websites are using like every 2 weeks, something goes live. And then basically check on the day or the day after that to make sure that if something weird comes up that's that you're fast there to fix things or to to flag it and then to set it up and then also to set alerts up.

So, for example, Google alerts. ContentKing, you can set up different alerts or the crawl as well so to basically on multiple stages. So before to go live and after so you can take quick, very quick action.

And there are a lot of horror stories like, like, for example, it's like, it happens to the best of us. But things is, like you. You have, for example, an AB test. And you see, like that the test version works better in the AB test, I know index. And when it's pushed live you know? Index that was forgotten to take off? it happens. I was also working for a large enterprise site and something like we. Even as I say, we're unaware that something was being updated on that part but we noticed that their most important pages and shopping pages. how they know the index. And then we're like, Oh, that's very weird, because these are like the revenue pages. And then, this is a website of 100,000 pages. And so it's like a really enterprise site, which is operating across 80 countries. And all those pages were on no index. So there's like a massive setback.

We found it quite quickly. And like we had with the developers, we got it fixed. But Google picked them up already. So all the traffic across the 80 countries are declining in the countries the people were like calling the head office like, what's happening. So yeah, those kind of things you actually want to prevent. And have things in place like, even when stories called life that are not SEO related, but they are impacting the site in the front end, you want to make sure that you, if there's an issue you capture that as soon as possible.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: I don't think I could have said it any better, Miranda. I mean truthfully. Yeah, for any SEO to have some kind of alert, scheduled crawl to just really get your back end. Situations like that is crucial, whether you use SEMrush, or ahrefs, or Botify. Or you know, whatever software, even just having that set up in the background.

Like for me, primarily, I like to crawl sides with screaming frog. But I might have, you know different tools, also crawling the website in the background to alert me for those things when they happen in real time versus waiting for the next crawl schedule in, in the queue to find it after the fact.

And yeah, that can be a a big horror story, too, when all those pages become no index. And that's the funny thing about technical SEO too, like one line of code can take down your rankings in a lot of ways, whether it's robots, txt getting deployed, blocking the entire site or a global site. Wide meta-robots, no index tag, things like that can absolutely destroy you in a lot of ways, and so setting up alerts from those tools is crucial.

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Another like horror story. You've had your test site, you're building a new website. You put it live. But you forget to update the robots, the so it's still as a disallow. So there are a lot of like examples and things like to pay like a lot of attention to detail. Because, yeah, what? Steffan said, like, very small lines of code can have a massive impact.

ERIN MYERS: Good ones, good ones, super spooky things that you hope never happens. But it does happen to even the best of us and definitely going to have a safety net in place to Steffan and Miranda's point. Somebody in chat mentioned, for Ben Schmidt, said for free you can have an ahrefs just crawl on your site weekly, and it will send you via email automatically. That's true. For SEMRush, too. If you're a SEMRush user, you can set up automatic email alerts with that tool as well.

Great, let's see, getting down here. And we only have a couple of minutes left. So one last question from me, and then we'll get to any additional questions from the audience. This is actually something that came up earlier this week. And I think it's a little funny. And just for the addressing, Steffan Miranda, what bothers you about SEO?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: Do you want to start?

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: I think it's that not really knowing exactly the exact impact or being able to predict what will happen if you do X, right and oftentimes, like your clients, they want to know what is going to be the traffic or ranking impact. If we do this and you have to give them. The, you know. Go-to tech, SEO answers. "It depends." And while it seems like a cop out, it's true, like oftentimes it's really hard to predict or forecast what any particular recommendation is going to do for your website and relative to your website.

And I think that is probably one of the most frustrating things, but it also makes it the best thing as well, because then, when you do all that work, and you see, you know, great results. Then you feel that reward for it. I think that that's what keeps most of us coming back to SEO and being an SEO is, you know that that dopamine hit you get when you see the rankings you wanted to accomplish after all, the hard work that you did leading up to that point. I think that's what keeps us coming back.

ERIN MYERS: Yeah, uncertainty is hard, but it can pay off when it does. Miranda, How about you?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: One thing I also find very annoying is to delay impact. So you're doing all this, how hard work. And then maybe you get impacting like 3 weeks, if you're lucky or like 3 months or 6 months. So sometimes it's a very annoying that you do all the work and then, the impact follows later.

Another thing is like the google core updates you're working with. So normally, when you do well, you shouldn't have too much impact from those updates because it's actually in line with what Google tries to achieve. So to bring the best websites out there that hits the user query, but still, if you're hit, it's very annoying, because they can come at a sudden moment. And then, yeah, it's screws up all your metrics. So it like a lot of unpredictable, also to Steffan's points, I think that's the most annoying part of SEO.

And actually, because of that like, that's why, you see, paid search budgets are larger than SEO, because they know if they spend so many amounts on paid search they get, this is what they get out of it. But in SEO they don't know exactly how long it will take. How much will you get out of it? So although if you look to the cost of SEO traffic, depends on your market. But you see that SEO generates a trip. It's the more low cost way of traffic. But then, because it's so unpredictable people, our companies actually spend more on paid search because they know what they're going to get out of it.

ERIN MYERS: Good point. Very good point, Miranda. Glad you actually touched on that. The difference between a paid budget and an organic budget is typically vast from what we see. For good reason. But long term we do see the payoff for organic and technical SEO work to be tenfold over time. so it's worth it to invest here, I think, is is one thing, I'd like everyone to take away.

Questions from the audience, any recommendations for finding long tail keywords?

MIRANDA GAHRMANN: I like to use a lot like basically if you do. keyword research in the editor of your planning, you only get like the top keyword. So you don't get like like the key words under it, and wmoree the long tail.

So I like to use the a lot like, and the public to see like what kind of questions or things are out there and then when I make it export. I then put it again in the keyword planet to get the search

forums for those questions, to see which ones are popular. So that's one way, what I would like, what I like to use to get a bit more long tail keywords that they multiply it. People also ask with any room for stepping as well.

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: That's a great strategy. I recently have really fallen in love with the [keyword magic tool in SEMRush](#). there's it's really powerful. They're making a lot of changes to it. But also too, I think, for finding long tail keywords that you probably didn't know might be driving impressions, for your side is just running through your search console. And you might be able to find a lot of long tail phrases that might be populating impressions, I mean not necessarily clicks or traffic.

But if you use, like Reg operators, to include keywords like who, when, where, why, how, or things like that, you might be able to derive some questions or other long tail phrases, I mean, that's more so, Questions. But other long tail phrases in that regard from your own first party data, then, looking at like a third party tool, and that, I think, is always a big win, because you know that you might already have momentum for some of these keywords because you're getting impressions. You may just not have the rankings to produce the traffic: and I I think that's usually like a big score.

ERIN MYERS: Another one from Francisco, lets squeeze it in, when pushing updates on a website should you push the entire site or only the pages that have been updated?

STEFFAN HERNANDEZ: it depends. Whatever updates you are. If it only affects a certain component of your site, then it may be safer or less riskier to do that. But if you're pushing updates that could be site wide. And I guess it also depends too like, are these just strictly code updates? Or is it also related to your database, you know there's lots of different factors there, and also to your tech stack are you using git or some kind of repository for your code? Are you pushing from like a staging environment to a production environment? it!

I guess it would depend there. But I would say what it the part. The best answer is, whatever is the least risk that you're willing to take if it's not necessary, and you can deploy in only certain sections, perhaps do that. But it, I guess it just depends

ERIN MYERS: cool. I see. Lexi turned your camera back on. I think that means we are at time. We still have some questions coming in. Koshev. our first webinar that we did in this series back in May, was focused on AI. You might want to go back and visit that. It's in our resource center if you want to check it out.

But, Lexi, I will hand it over to you. Steffan and Miranda. Thank you. It was so great talking to you both.

LEXI MOSTEK: Thank you to everyone. This was amazing. I seriously think we could have had like 6 webinars to talk about this. it's been really fun as someone that's not in SEO. And as an events. I've been laughing alongside with you. The answers have been amazing. thank you, Steffan. Miranda. I actually think Miranda's Internet just went out. She was frozen.

But just a reminder. Everyone we are recording these, and we will post on our resources as well as we're taking all your questions. We're listening here at WP Engine. We're trying to provide you all with the resources to continue to grow your SEO and know more. So please stay tuned as we continue to produce more content and post all 3 recordings of the week, and that being said, happy Fourth of July to those of you that are in the US. We will see you all later next week. If not, have a great weekend. Thank you.