

**EmmyLou:** Everyone can produce content with the help of AI. The challenge that we're seeing is that average content is just so abundant. It's the stuff that LLMs can't generate for us, which is really going to help differentiate our content.

**Narrator:** This is AdLab performance marketing dissected, decoded, and delivered.

**Gavin:** What's happening? Listeners, thanks for joining me in the AdLab. I'm your host, Gavin Flynn. Before we jump in, we've got something special for AdLab listeners. If you're looking for fresh ideas to grow your business, head over to AdLab for a free marketing review from the team here at LP, plus a special listener discount if you decide we're the right agency to work with.

**Gavin:** If you go through and do the review, you could also do it with me. Gavin I do reviews on the daily. I've probably conservatively audited over 500 pay-per-click (PPC) accounts over the years, so yeah, I'd love to chat. Let's get the conversation rolling. Now let's get into today's episode. Search is changing faster than ever between AI overviews, new search behaviors, and all the acronyms that are being thrown around SEO, it can be hard for brands to know what actually matters and what you should be focusing on from a strategy perspective.

**Gavin:** Later in the show, I'm going to be joined by EmmyLou, Director of Owned Media here at LP. She is going to be breaking down how SEO is evolving, what AI means for organic search, and how brands can build a strategy that's ready for the future. Before we get into that, I'm joined for this week's hot headline by our Manager of Creative Operations, Lona to Puni for this week's Hot headline.

**Gavin:** Lona, thanks for your thanks for joining us today for our hot headline.

**Lona:** Yes, thank you for having me.

**Gavin:** So what we're talking about today is the World Cup. And I think that we'll be airing this episode in and around the World Cup final. And it's definitely, at least for me, dominated my social media feed. I don't know about you if you've been getting a lot of World Cup content on your social feeds these days.

**Lona:** Yeah, I see a lot of Erling Erling Collins these days.

**Gavin:** The tall Nordic man himself, right?

**Lona:** Yeah, I see that man every time I go on my Instagram, whether I like it or not.

**Gavin:** And actually, I was happy to have you on because you're engaging with everything around the World Cup as not like a super fan. Yeah. Where there's a way to engage with these external events from a nerd perspective, but also just from a marketing perspective and maybe a more, a more objective kind of like third party view about how marketing has intersected with the World Cup.

**Gavin:** And there's been a lot of headlines. The one that has come up a lot is the insertion of TV breaks within the games, which I'm not going to get into because as a soccer nerd, that made me really angry. So we're not going to talk about that. But there have been a few other social media pushes that brands have done that have been reactive to World Cup initiatives.

**Gavin:** There was one that you mentioned that I actually hadn't heard of about the Levi's Stadium. Tell me about that one.

**Lona:** Tell me about that. Yeah. So what happened with Levi's Stadium was because there was a World Cup game happening there, and Levi's was not an official sponsor of the event. They had to FIFA World Cup covered the Levi's logo, but.

**Gavin:** They just they just basically like put a sheet over it. Sheep. Right?

**Lona:** Yeah. They put a sheet over it. Yeah. And it was hilarious because it was still very obviously the Levi's logo. And everyone knows they're at Levi's Stadium, which is really hilarious. And so Levi's kind of use this as a marketing opportunity for them, which is pretty genius. I mean, I think you could with everything in marketing and just in life, you could go one of two ways.

**Lona:** You can be super upset that they cover up, covered up your logo, and you could take the El, or you can say, how can we spin this to benefit us?

**Gavin:** Piggyback off of it. Yeah. So what did they end up doing?

**Lona:** So they ended up something that was super hilarious to me, is that they changed their Instagram profile photo to the Levi's logo with the white sheet over it. And then there were a few memes, you know, and like a few, like, little funny jokes about, yeah, you still know it's us type of thing. Like head nods to it, but nothing that like really explicitly said anything about soccer, the World Cup, FIFA.

**Lona:** Because, you know, part of the whole reason why they had to cover up the logos, because FIFA is really, really specific with their sponsors and with rights and licensing. And so they were able to, like, turn this moment around and have this viral moment without even calling to the event, which is really impressive.

**Gavin:** Which creates social media discussion and creates conversation around the campaign. Because there's been a lot of big campaigns throughout the World Cup from major sports brands, your Nike's, your Adidas, kind of the movie level production. But a lot of what actually catches on social is piggybacking off of things that have happened, not pre-planning for something that might happen.

**Lona:** Totally.

**Gavin:** And I think that this has larger implications. And I think brands that aren't Adidas and Levi's can learn from this a little bit, where we're now in a space, and I think we've been in this space. But the World Cup is just such a great example of this where we're in such a

quick hit marketing environment these days, that the ability to respond to something that's happening in your industry, and again, it doesn't need to be as big as the World Cup.

**Gavin:** We're talking about literally the biggest sporting event every four years in the world.

**Lona:** Totally.

**Gavin:** If you're a smaller E-com brand out there who maybe sells baby clothes, or maybe you sell a coffee creamer, there's going to be opportunities to piggyback off of conversations or events in your space, and I would really recommend brands do this. I'm sure that you've probably seen this with LP brands. I can think of one specifically that had a major figure in the brand on a very prominent podcast, and the planning around that from the agency side is how do we position our paid ad spend around this event?

**Gavin:** Do we increase the velocity on paid more daily budget allocation? I'm sure that you've maybe seen and worked on a few of those yourself. The the piece I was curious about was the creative side because that's where where you live, the turnaround time for brands to get that creative launched, I know can be a little bit of a holdup.

**Gavin:** What would your recommendation be for a smaller brand that might have something that they want to piggyback off of? Do they need to go full new creative for that? Do what? I'm curious where you kind of picture a brand being able to step in. If it's not like a major like Adidas or a Nike.

**Lona:** I think there are benefits to not being one of the major brands out there. One of the major benefits to being like a smaller business is that you do probably have more of an ability to, you know, be quick, take a risk.

**Gavin:** Yeah.

**Lona:** Take a think on your feet and take a risk to because the risks are not as detrimental or big in some cases. You know, if you see a brand, a big brand fumble, the fumble can be detrimental and people could cancel you and it could. And yes, that can happen with a small brand as well. But you have this benefit of like not taking yourself too seriously with a smaller brands.

**Lona:** And so I think the most important thing is to like think on your feet and be adaptable and flexible and don't try to just do what these bigger brands are doing just for the sake of wanting virality. But like, think about how the current events or trends or whatever is happening in the world correlates to your specific brand.

**Gavin:** Yeah, yeah. And also the, the idea of you don't need to go through as many checks if you're a smaller brand as a marketing manager and a CEO, and that's it. And if you can get approval and you can respond that day, you might be able to piggyback off something. One final question for you. Hot headline. Do you know who's playing today on on the date 715.

**Gavin:** Could could if I were to do a pop quiz, could you name one of the teams playing in today's game?

**Lona:** Spain.

**Gavin:** Spain played yesterday, but Will.

**Lona:** And France played yesterday. Spain one right. Yeah I.

**Gavin:** That you're listen, we'll put you in. We'll put you in the FIFA World Cup expert okay.

**Lona:** Yeah. Once my once my team got booted, you know.

**Gavin:** In the early rounds. Right.

**Lona:** Very early rounds.

**Gavin:** It's such a big event and there's so much talk about it. I did want to. It's fun having a hot headline to kind of be like at the moment. So awesome. Thank you so much for joining.

**Lona:** Cool. Thank you.

**Gavin:** That was great. Lona. Thank you for joining. Looking forward to seeing what the results are for this World Cup. Now let's jump into today's deep dive. Joining me today is EmmyLou, director of Owned Media at LP. EmmyLou spent years helping brands grow through SEO and content strategy, while leading many of LP's biggest initiatives around AI powered content and organic search.

**Gavin:** Today, we're going to be talking about how SEO is evolving in the age of AI, what E-E-A-T really means for brands, and what businesses can do today to future proof their organic visibility. Let's head into the lab.

**Gavin:** Emmylou, Emmy, thank you so much for joining AdLab today.

**EmmyLou:** Yes, thanks for having me.

**Gavin:** So we've got a pretty wide ranging conversation today because we're talking about SEO in an LLM world and really diving into the new world of how these large language models are affecting SEO strategies. But first, before we get into any of that and we dive into your expertise and really get into the weeds here, first, I wanted to ask you, what acronym are we using these days?

**Gavin:** Because in the in our world, I've heard EO, I've heard GEO. I've also seen SEO repurposed as and GEO. Where are you putting your vote? Do we do we have a consensus yet as an industry on where we're going with this?

**EmmyLou:** I was hoping that you were going to ask this, Gavin. So while take I know, but I'm going with SEO all the way.

**EmmyLou:** I know, yeah, I know, strategies have shifted. But they did they have done that before. So like when we talk about mobile, we think about featured snippets voice. It's it's definitely changed. It's not a new field. We haven't created these new jobs. I want to say it's just an everyday day in SEO. The industry has definitely reinvented itself.

**EmmyLou:** I mean, they do that frequently for decades, but we've never needed a new name to do it. I also think it's important, something that we think about. It's, you know, we've been doing the same things this whole time. The fundamentals haven't changed. Make your site crawl technically sound, create content that's useful for your audience and build a real a build real authority and trust.

**EmmyLou:** Those are things that have always made good SEO. And I you know, those are things that are getting cited, helping you get cited in AI answers today. And just because I thought you were going to ask me this, I brought receipts. I do think it's important to call out Google did publish this very thing this past May, when they were talking about how you can optimize your site for generative AI search, and they did state it is still SEO.

**EmmyLou:** So, you know, Google casted the vote for us. I think we need to go with that.

**Gavin:** Which I'm happy to hear, because if you think about what SEO is, it's still search and what people are doing. Oftentimes, even if they're using Copilot or Gemini or ChatGPT, they're searching and it's. Still optimizing for a search engine, even if that search engine might be pulling that information via an alarm. And also, everybody can relax on trying to repurpose all of these different acronyms on their websites.

**Gavin:** Guys, it's still optimizing these search engines, even. It's even if it's a little different. Now, you one thing I also wanted to talk to you about was your own direct interaction with how you've been searching since LLMs have come to light, and also how you and your family utilize search. I'm actually really curious. I know that you're you're a mother and you have a family.

**Gavin:** I was curious to also hear how you're seeing the younger generation interact with these platforms. You probably keep an eye on what your kids are doing. What have you seen their behavior looks like?

**EmmyLou:** So it's crazy to think how kids are the generation today they are not concerned with, you know, first page results or the blue links that we've all come, you know, have grown to be accustomed to and find so important. So we are living in this. We're living in this space where we are actively seeing behavior shift. And as a mom of four, I see that all the time.

**EmmyLou:** So it is like you said, AI definitely has impacted me professionally, but it's something that we talk about at home. I want my kids to understand that it is a tool. It's not a cheat code. Like if you are gaming, they can absolutely use it to learn and brainstorm. But we also still put a lot of emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving, being creative, but also using it responsibly.

**EmmyLou:** And I think that's one of the most important skills we can really teach this generation is how to develop knowing how to work alongside AI while still being able to think for yourself.

**Gavin:** No, I love that. And I think the responsible use piece also has larger implications on how agencies use these tools. And I actually wanted to hear from you how on the agency side, you've incorporated these tools for content delivery, because I know that we talk a lot about schema on site content, but also articles and blogs. How have you seen these tools incorporated into SEO content development workflows?

**EmmyLou:** Yeah, I think that is that's a big one because that's like been one of the biggest things that we that I've seen changed with my time here at LP was just the introduction of AI in general. So before AI or before ChatGPT really became a household name, we definitely recognized early on the AI was going to be a big game changer, I guess, for lack of better words and how we were going to create content and how people were going to search for content.

**EmmyLou:** So we really started rethinking everything from the ground up. And since that, it's just been this continuous evolution of how we can not only make our teams more efficient, but how we can scale content production in a way that really benefits clients. And just to help clarify, it's not that we're just producing more content. I think that's a really important distinction, because the challenge with AI content has never been can we produce more?

**EmmyLou:** Everyone can produce content with the help of AI. It's the challenge. The challenge that we're seeing is that average content is just so abundant. So our whole approach has been using AI as an assistant, keeping, you know, the human touch behind that. Humans are the authority. We're really, you know, banking on our team and our clients to add expertise, to add perspective.

**EmmyLou:** It's the stuff that LLMs can't generate for us, which is really going to help differentiate our content from all of the other AI generated content that's being pumped out there right now.

**Gavin:** Well, and to add on to that, I know that the type of content being produced has to be in a slightly different format than what we've seen in the past. And correct me if I'm wrong here, and actually, I'd be curious to hear your input on this, but thinking about what those prompts are going to look like from the user or the consumer side, and having content that answers those questions.

**Gavin:** So have you seen maybe like Shay's or compare competitor comparisons, any any changes in the type or the format of written content that is best delivered for LMS to crawl through?

**EmmyLou:** Yeah, I think one of the biggest takeaways is that content just need not only does it need to be unique like I just mentioned, but it just needs to answer the question or

the query. So how you format that can be up to you. But I do think that's where the data that we have and that brands are sitting on from customers, from reviews, those are the questions that if one person had them, I bet multiple people have them.

**EmmyLou:** And we really want to use that and publish it. So if it's direct, if we're answering the question, we're not dancing around an answer within 2000 words. We're, you know, answering that within the first 20% of your article. So again, it's easy to find it's user friendly. That can really help differentiate your content and give your brand almost this content roadmap that LMS don't have, and neither do your competitors because it is so unique to you.

**Gavin:** Yeah. And there is a hot headline actually, that we covered on the podcast, maybe just a couple of weeks ago around the amount of third party citations that are showing up in LMS and ChatGPT and those types of searches these days. So it's about brands also balancing how the external conversation matches up with the conversation that's happening on your website and how those create a unified story, which actually good transition because I've also been seen.

**Gavin:** Come up often, and it's a slightly different acronym from what was being used before. Now explain this to me because it's a Google framework for that's used by human reviewers to search algorithmrithms. Explain to me what this E-E-A-T acronym is.

**EmmyLou:** Yeah for sure. So E-E-A-T is basically how Google determines whether or not to trust your content. So the framework is built on experts or I'm sorry, experience, expertise, authoritative ness and trustworthiness. That extra E for experience was added about the time when ChatGPT, I want to say, started building more traction, and it was basically Google validating kind of these these themes that we're talking about now where it's like, anyone can generate this average content now we want to see more value behind it.

**EmmyLou:** So pretty much prove it. Share your experience. Share your stories. Share firsthand what you how your brand stands out amongst your competitors. Those are the things that we really want to inject into content. What can make your content site site worthy? Why it should be pulled up in answers. That's the experience piece that's missing from just average AI content and what can make your content valuable.

**EmmyLou:** So I think it's you know, your content should just help answer why should we trust your brand and hear all the amazing reasons that we have?

**Gavin:** That trust component is massive. And I'm and I'm going to make a very big picture statement here. And I want you to either you feel free to agree disagree. Add on to what I'm about to say, but I see a world in which this is actually there's a lot of hang wringing hand-wringing about the potential impacts of AI and AI usage, which I hear all that I ingest all of it on a daily basis at my work.

**Gavin:** I do think in this particular situation for what we're talking about in terms of consumers being able to interact with brands that provide a quality experience, it seems

like we're now going to be in a world where the crowdsourcing of social proof content and information around the quality of services is going to be the thing that rises brains to the top, rather than the message specifically that the brand puts in, let's say, a paid ad and how that and I want to get your thoughts on that, though.

**Gavin:** Do you think that this is actually going to be a net positive for consumers who are looking to find the best service provider? I'm curious your thoughts.

**EmmyLou:** Yeah, I do. I think that speaks a lot to brand visibility. And you know, your just your general presence online. I think that like we are saying about algorithm, like a lot of that speaks directly to AI visibility. But it also when we break it down it is SEO. It is how your brand is represented and when it becomes reliable and credible for the user.

**EmmyLou:** And who are you going to trust? You are going to trust social proof. You're going to trust, you know, the reviews for a local business. You're going to trust those reviews of 50 of your neighbors, maybe over something, you know, that you're just reading on the side. I think it kind of speaks to back linking a little bit to like in the past, where it was like back linking was very important.

**EmmyLou:** It is still very important right now. It's just there are just even more signals that are being taken into consideration when we're thinking about building credibility in recognition. LLMs aren't necessarily looking just at links. They are looking at the social proof, the mentions, the reviews, citations, podcasts. This is all part of brand building. How is your brand being talked about in the places where your audience is hanging out?

**EmmyLou:** I think case in point, right? I'm on this podcast right now. You could say this is, you know, a link building effort for 2026. It's the digital PR part of it, and diversifying your content through different channels, different medias. That is, I think, what's really going to build your presence. You know, today with AI visibility.

**Gavin:** One thing you mentioned there was backlinks, and I wanted to pause there for a second because I could see a brand or a marketing manager at a brand, maybe thinking that the value of a backlink is changing, and how a backlink fits into the full strategy of the SEO work that a brand is doing. How is the value of a backlink changing from your perspective?

**EmmyLou:** So their backlinks are still still important? It's still good to be referenced by other credible sources to be, you know, when we think about it, another site or another publication, and citing you as a great resource or reference, I think it's just part of this umbrella of other ways that you can build that social or, I'm sorry, the your web presence or your visibility online.

**EmmyLou:** So your brand recognition. So besides just backlinks building trust, you have those other things like citations that can also build trust and help feed into AI as well.

**Gavin:** Got it. One other question. And this has been a question that I've heard a lot specifically on the technical side of SEO. Talk to me a little bit about schema. I know that a

lot of people are hearing that the way that Google is crawling sites has also slightly changed. Maybe the way that a site is structured has changed.

**Gavin:** Tell me a little bit about how LLMs interact with schema within a website to actually crawl that information. Did you mention that that we should make sure that the content is kind of front loaded on a site? Talk to me a little bit about that.

**EmmyLou:** Yeah. So the schema part of it. So the structured data that is what for when we're crawling the technical piece. So part of that is still solid SEO kind of when we were talking about the foundational pieces and making sure your site is not only crawl but technically sound, but that markup is telling LLMs what you have on the site.

**EmmyLou:** So being able to have all of that information be consistent to tell them. So a really good example is like your Google business profile. So when we're talking about kind of local citations we're talking about Nap which is like name address phone number. That all has a schema markup, structured data that can help communicate those things to AI.

**EmmyLou:** Yeah. To make sure that you are the biggest thing is making sure that it's consistent everywhere on all those directories. But those are the things that are going to keep AI informed and really support your local local focus.

**Gavin:** So we've got technical SEO on a website. We have citations, we have on site content delivery for articles and blogs. We have the social proof. Anything else you'd recommend? Brands either start thinking about or implementing to safeguard their SEO future with the changing user behavior. Anything that I'm missing here that you would recommend on the list?

**EmmyLou:** I don't think so. Gavin, I think the biggest takeaway is that you can always bet on those fundamentals. I think when we think about what survives algorithmrithm updates, what survives some of these trends, that kind of cycle through all the things that Google publishes, it's that your your site again, those three pillars being technically sound, solid content with real experience and brands that people trust.

**EmmyLou:** I think those are the things that businesses should continue to focus on. Diversifying your content strategy. Like I mentioned, I think that's also great because it gives you you you have such a great content roadmap, you have user generated content, you have so many resources that you can continue to pump actual, factual, credible pieces, snippets, whatever you want, and all kinds of different forms of media that will also help build your brand in the presence to survive algorithmrithm updates in the future.

**Gavin:** Lovely summation of the conversation. I think that that's a perfect place to cap us off, Emmy. Probably not our last time chatting about this particular topic. As these systems continue to change and evolve, it might look very different even in 6 to 12 months, and.

**Gavin:** Might even change within that time. So probably not our last time chatting. But yeah, thank you so much for joining. That was incredibly informational.

**EmmyLou:** Yeah, thanks for having me.

**Gavin:** Big thanks to Emmylou for joining us and sharing her insights on the future of SEO and organic search. Before we wrap up, don't forget to visit AdLab Podcast to claim your free marketing review and a special listener discount. If you're wondering where your biggest growth opportunities are. We'd love to help you find them. If you enjoyed the episode, be sure to subscribe!

**Gavin:** Leave a review. It really helps more marketers discover the show. Thank you for listening and we'll see you next week in the lab.