



# Content Writing Guidelines

— [Sk Rafiqul Islam](#), SEO consultant and creator of Content Marketing VIP.

## What makes good content?

Good content:	Low-quality content:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Demonstrate trustworthiness</li><li>● Answer a common question(s) of readers</li><li>● Feels like a conversation</li><li>● Add unique perspective not just summarizing what the top ranking articles are saying</li><li>● Help readers to pull out the important information as quickly as possible</li><li>● Extremely actionable for the readers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Contains a lot of fluff</li><li>● Shares no real examples</li><li>● Generic introduction</li><li>● Uses difficult and complex words</li><li>● Uses too lengthy sentences to read</li><li>● Is difficult to scan</li><li>● Doesn't support stats or any other statistics</li><li>● Poor content readability</li><li>● Lacks actionability</li></ul>

### 01. Writing Introduction

The introduction should tell the readers about the purpose of the article/webpage and what benefits/information users will get after reading the article.

**Two types of introduction to use:**

#### A. Introduction for top of the funnel articles

Think of the introduction as a quick way of informing 'who is this article for' and 'why they should read this.'

- Write a short and concise blog introduction under 80-100 words max.
- Don't add unnecessary statistics (add only if it makes sense), stories, & fluff in the introduction.

Here are three examples:

## The Beginner's Guide to the Metaverse

The Metaverse: It's yet another buzzword that emerged in 2021.

But how much of it is hype and how much of it is the real deal?

With some of today's largest companies investing billions into the concept, proponents argue it's the future of how we'll interact online.

Other more skeptical observers argue it's a passing fad, or that the metaverse is already here.

In this guide, we'll explore the metaverse from all angles to separate the hype from reality.

## The Beginners Guide to Fintech

Financial Technology (Fintech) is one of the hottest sectors on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley.

With the potential to disrupt the traditional banking system, fintech companies have become some of the fastest-growing startups on the planet.


In this new guide, we'll explain what fintech is, how it works, practical use cases, and what obstacles the industry currently faces.

### B. Introduction for bottom of the funnel keywords

BOFU pages are more likely to generate leads and conversions for clients. So, writing the same generic introduction doesn't make sense.

So, your goal should be aligning business offerings and blog topics and connecting them with social proof or past results (numbers from case studies).

Below, I have added some examples of blog introduction that builds trustworthiness and integrate social proof for business offerings 🙌

 Our engineering team has been running standups **everyday since 2009**. From our own experience, and through our talks with some of **Geekbot's 170,000 users**, we noticed a **set of frequent/repeating questions** that many teams have about **daily standup meetings**.

So we decided to create a comprehensive post that consolidates many important questions we've received about daily standups over the years into the ~10 most common themes, in the form of questions we get on standup meetings.

(Article topic: daily standup meetings)

At Codegnan, we have trained more than **30,000 students** in the IT tech fields, especially in the full-stack Java program. And, some of the often-asked **questions our students ask** before joining the training program are:

- What is the course curriculum of the full-stack Java course?
- What topics and subjects are covered in your full-stack Java syllabus?

So, we decided to create this transparent course syllabus for anyone wanting to become a full-stack Java developer in 2024.

(Article topic: Java course syllabus)

Want to market and monetize your co-working spaces?

If so, you're at the right place.

In this guide, I'll share 7 proven digital marketing strategies for co-working spaces that we use to fill co-working spaces for our clients.

Most of all, you'll get the exact process that **we used to reach 0-500 seats** in record time for one of our clients.

Let's jump right into the tactics.

(Article topic: Digital marketing for co-working spaces)

The right niche can make or break your dropshipping business. Therefore, it is critical that you get it right from the beginning. The right niche is scalable, offers higher margins, and contains low competition.

After **shipping 50,000+ dropshipping products** worldwide for **7000+ active sellers**, we know dropshipping and print-on-demand business inside and out.

Therefore, we present to you the most profitable 23 dropshipping niches in 2024.

By relying on our data-driven approach and industry experience, you can confidently set yourself up for success in the world of dropshipping.

(Article topic: Dropshipping niches)

Each of the above introductions gives you a sense of why I should trust this information and also it mentions the business offerings in a meaningful way.

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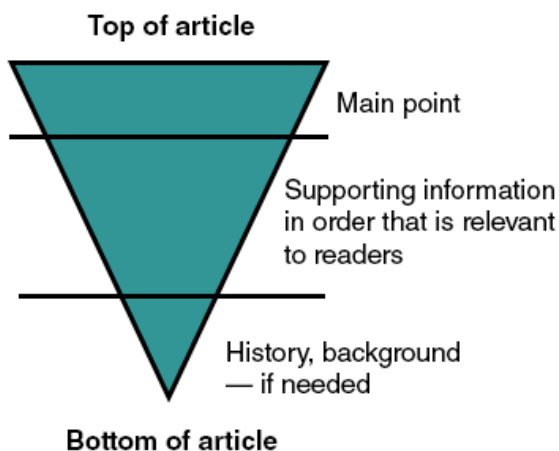
## 02. Aim for Low Time to Value

One of the ways to provide excellent content experience to readers is by reducing the time-to-value.

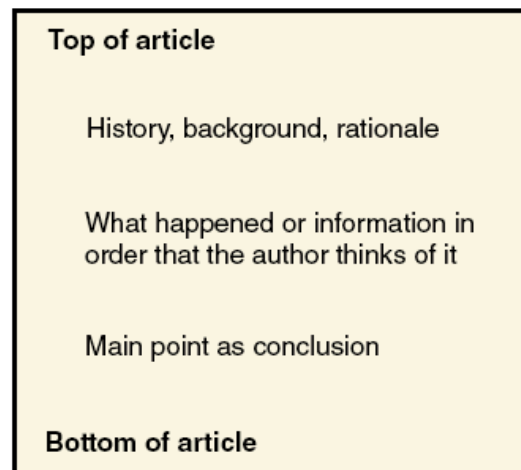
It is time a user takes to find the desired outcome (answer, solution, benefit) from the article/page.

**Here's what it means to follow the low-time-to-value approach or Inverted pyramid style:**

### Inverted pyramid style



### Traditional narrative style



**WHAT TO LEARN:** Follow the top-to-bottom hierarchy, saving less important information for last. The same approach can be followed for writing introductions (when relevant).

Here are some examples 📌

**Recommended:**

## How much is real estate commission?

Typically, real estate commission is 5%–6% of the home's sale price. In most areas, the buyer's agent receives 2.5%–3% in commission and the seller's agent receives 2.5%–3% in commission. This can vary by agent and location.

**WHAT TO LEARN:** The above content example answers the question in the first paragraph.

### Recommended:

#### Do you have to pay commission if you don't buy a home?

As a buyer, you likely won't have to pay agent commission whether you buy a home or not, since sellers usually pay the commission. But keep in mind that agents are paid at the end of the process, so if you tour homes with a real estate agent and don't end up buying, the agent won't be paid for their time.

If you've signed a contract known as a buyer's agency agreement, it may be difficult to break up with your agent later if you decide you don't like them and want

**WHAT TO LEARN:** Some sections or headings may not have a direct yes/no answer— so you might need to answer other factors. The above screenshot is a good example of this scenario where the first sentence answers the question and later explains other factors.

**Not recommended:**

# What is Big Data Analytics?

By [Great Learning](#) / Updated on Jan 6, 2023 /  257



Imagine you're a business owner who's been struggling to keep up with the latest trends. You know that in order to stay afloat, you need to be able to make data-driven decisions, but data is becoming more and more complex every day. What do you do?

Imagine you could get insights from all of your data in real time. Imagine you could prevent problems before they happen. Imagine you could make better decisions faster. This is where big data analytics pitches in. With big data analytics, you can do all of this and more.



**WHAT TO LEARN:** The time-to-value for the above heading is low as it doesn't answer the question in the beginning section.

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## 03. No room for sharing opinions unless it is asked for

Readers want information that is trustworthy and credible.

Don't write your opinion. Want to justify a point? Add statistics, data, and research points to justify your claims.

### Example:

**Not recommended:** I think X is the most important skill needed to become a data science engineer.

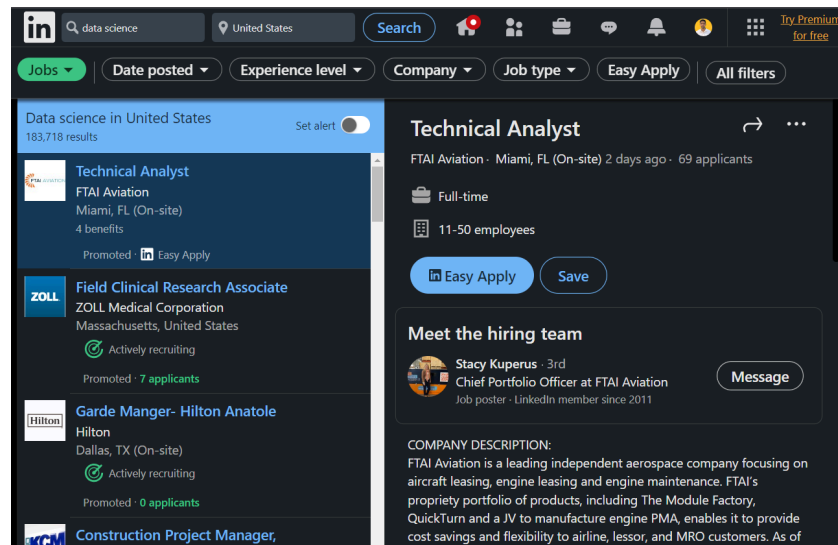
**Recommended:** X is one of the top three skills to become a data science engineer, as per McKinsey's [survey on 1000+ employers](#).

## Another example:

**Not recommended:** Data science is one of the most in-demand jobs in the technology field.

**Recommended:** Data science is one of the most in-demand jobs in the technology field.

In fact, there are [183k+ US-based data science jobs](#) available on LinkedIn.



(This screenshot validates the claim made by the writer)

## 04. Add external references (important)

*“Link, link, and link to relevant information. If you mention a summer reading program, link to it. If you mention a faculty member, link to their bio page. Don’t make people search for something that you mention if it already has a page.” – Duke University libraries.*

### Example of descriptive anchor text:

- **Not recommended:** [Read this](#) to learn the benefits of cloud computing
- **Recommended:** Check out this guide and [learn the benefits of cloud computing](#)
- **Recommended:** For any technical article, it is recommended to cite research papers from Google Scholar and cite them in the content.

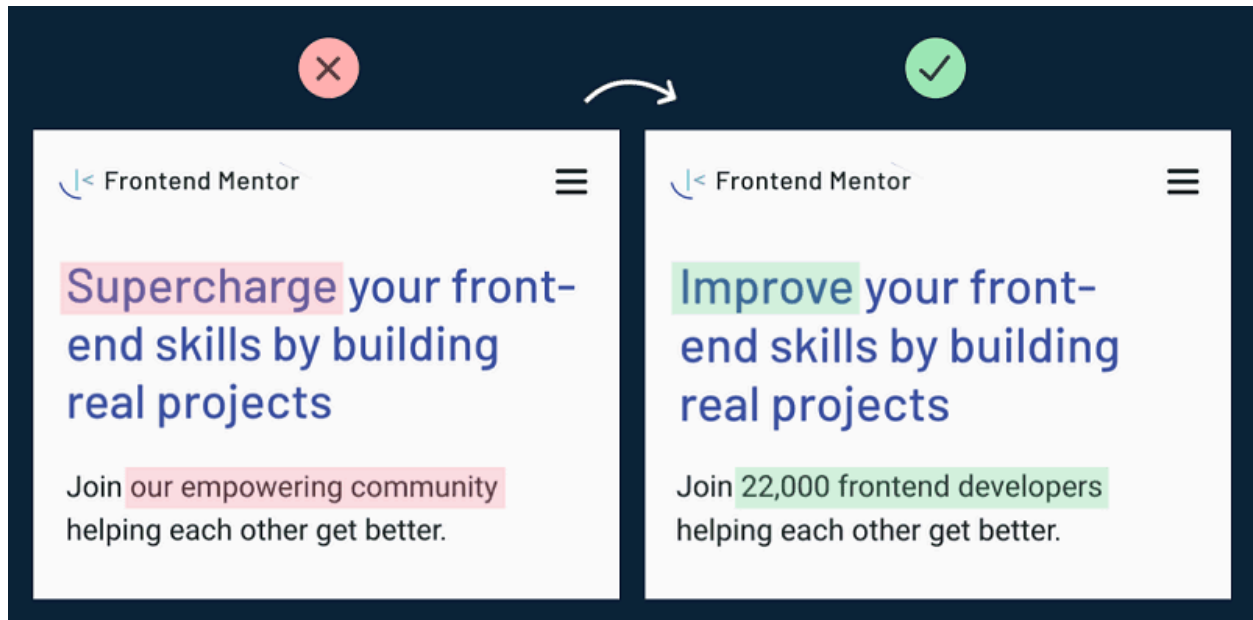


## 04. Write easy-to-digest content

### 1. Every sentence should add value/ something unique to the article

- Use simple words
- Try to limit using words that people don't use in their daily life

Example:



(Image from MarketingExamples)

### 2. Don't write longer sentences unnecessarily

Here's an example:

**Not recommended:** We can automate the task so that by using it, the time of the users is also saved.

**Recommended:** We can automate the task to save users' time.

### 3. To-the-point content is highly suggested

### 4. Limit paragraphs to 3 lines max

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## 05. Writing definition or answering quick questions

While answering the definition (e.g. what is [term], definition of [term], etc. ), the first paragraph (Under 2-3 lines) should be only about the definition.

This is helpful to win the featured snippet in Google. No need to add any examples or other details here.

Want some good examples?

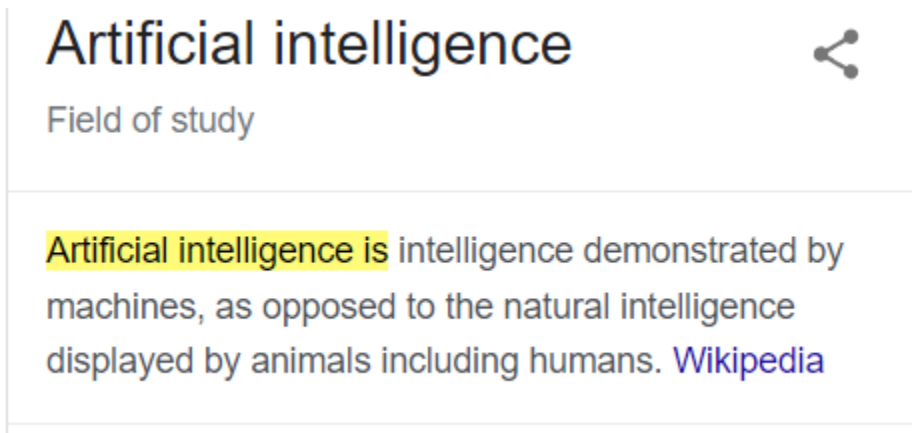
Read definitions from Wikipedia. The first paragraph answers the definition in a certain format.

You will see a common structure for writing definitions such as:

**Q. What is [term]?**

A. The [term] is \_\_\_\_\_

Example:



The image shows a featured snippet for the term 'Artificial intelligence'. At the top, the title 'Artificial intelligence' is displayed in a large, bold font, with a share icon to its right. Below the title, the category 'Field of study' is shown in a smaller, grey font. A horizontal line separates the title from the definition. The definition itself is highlighted in yellow and reads: 'Artificial intelligence is intelligence demonstrated by machines, as opposed to the natural intelligence displayed by animals including humans. Wikipedia'. The word 'Wikipedia' is a blue hyperlink.

Another one:

## What Is Copywriting?

Copywriting is the practice of crafting written text in order to inform, inspire or persuade. In most cases, copywriting is used to increase sales and conversions. Mediums, where copywriting is implemented, include sales letters, blog posts, advertisements and social media posts.

**Definition is written in one paragraph, under 40-50 words**

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## 06. Break chunks of information into pieces

Always use sub-headings (H3) or bullets to make the content easy to read and easy to scan.

The image shows two versions of a text block. The left version is a single block of text with a red 'X' over it, indicating it is poor. The right version is a block of text with a green checkmark over it, indicating it is good. The right version uses sub-headings and bullets to break the information into pieces.

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**Use sub-headings to improve readability**

**Pellentesque Gravid**

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**Fusce aliquet ante vitae tortor consequat laoreet →**

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- **Aenean eu faucibus mauris:** Pellentesque vel dolor ut lacus elementum placerat vel bibendum elit. Pellentesque viverra volutpat neque, sed scelerisque tortor dictum nec.
- **Proin fermentum auctor eros:** Ssed varius neque vestibulum sit amet. Sed et felis vestibulum, mollis metus ac, mattis nunc.
- **Etiam vel dui sodales:** Suscipit odio eget, placerat lacus. Quisque sed tristique eros, non laoreet odio. Phasellus sit amet ultrices ante. Pellentesque molestie porta lacus vel sodales. In egestas non libero a blandit.]

- Use sub-headings and H3 to make the content more readable.
- Don't expect the reader to read an article line by line. This is why our goal should be to make the information as easy to digest as possible.

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## 07. Improve credibility

Try to add at least one statistic within the content where it makes sense. Make sure that the source of the statistics is authoritative and credible.

Use Google Scholar to link to related studies, and mention other study papers or researches that improve the content quality and information accuracy.

Always research through Google Scholar articles to find additional information that top-ranking pages haven't covered well.

## 10. Readability test

To measure the readability of the content, use this tool: [Hemingway Editor](#)

And see where you can improve the content, use simple words, break long sentences, etc.

Consider:

- Maintaining a grade level of 9 or fewer
  - Use short sentences
  - Max 3 lines per paragraph
  - Use bulleted points wherever possible
  - Use simple words that we use in daily life. Avoid using jargons and difficult words in your content
- 

## 11. Product-led approach (not applicable to websites that do not have any product)

What it means:

*“Content where the product is woven into the narrative to illustrate a point, solve a problem, and/or help accomplish a goal.”* – Dr Fio Dossetto.

### Here’s an example from Shopify:

Shopify published an article about “How to Start Dropshipping in India.”

Users’ goal: To learn the benefits of dropshipping and its process.

## Example From Shopify

### Why and How to Start Dropshipping in India as an eCommerce Business

by Vanishikha Bhargava  
Sep 6, 2021 - 10 minute read



#### Start dropshipping in India with Shopify

Ready to get started with your online business?

It's time to explore Shopify for dropshipping in India to open a business without the hassle of managing, packaging or shipping.

#### Step 1: Create an account on Shopify

The very first step you need to take is signing up on Shopify. Don't worry, you start with a [free trial](#) and are not charged until you're ready to take your business live.

Here, Shopify didn't just share the process to start dropshipping. Instead, they have turned their product (eCommerce platform) into a solution to teach about the dropshipping process.

#### Another example from Notion:

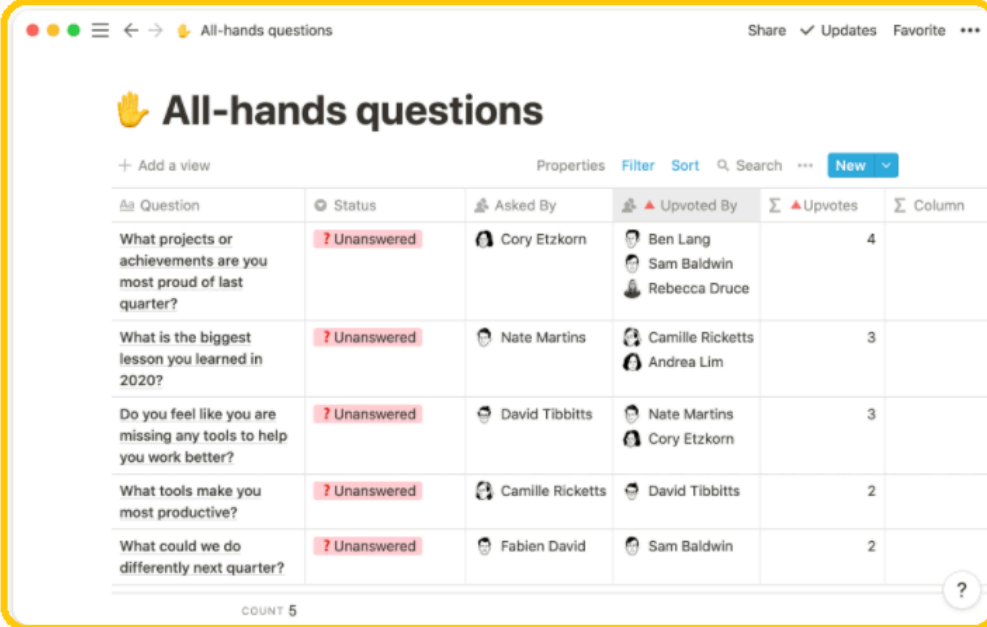
Notion publishes a lot of helpful articles for startups.

One of them is about "How to improve knowledge sharing within your startup", where they have presented Notion as a solution by adding:

- Product screenshots
- GIFs
- Product features, etc.

This is what it looks like:

You can even use Notion to create a questions database with an upvote feature, so everyone's voice is heard at the next all-hands.



The screenshot shows a Notion database titled "All-hands questions". The table has the following columns: Question, Status, Asked By, Upvoted By, Upvotes, and Column. There are 5 rows of data, all with a status of "Unanswered".

Question	Status	Asked By	Upvoted By	Upvotes	Column
What projects or achievements are you most proud of last quarter?	? Unanswered	Cory Etzkorn	Ben Lang Sam Baldwin Rebecca Druce	4	
What is the biggest lesson you learned in 2020?	? Unanswered	Nate Martins	Camille Ricketts Andrea Lim	3	
Do you feel like you are missing any tools to help you work better?	? Unanswered	David Tibbitts	Nate Martins Cory Etzkorn	3	
What tools make you most productive?	? Unanswered	Camille Ricketts	David Tibbitts	2	
What could we do differently next quarter?	? Unanswered	Fabien David	Sam Baldwin	2	

Everyone can ask questions to be answered at the next all-hands.

As part of creating an encouraging environment, leadership at your company should actively participate in knowledge sharing. This signals to employees that knowledge sharing is an integral part of company culture.

The goal here should be to turn your product/service into an important part of the content.

 **MUST-READ GUIDE for writers to understand the product-led content approach:** [Product-Led Content: What It Is & Why You Should Use It](#)

### 13. Content research (important)

In many cases, you won't have deep expertise on the blog topics.

So, you need to perform research to write the content and find more information about the topic.

Generally, writers type the same topic on Google and see what other websites have already written. Then the writer just summarizes what others are saying.

This is not recommended at all, why?

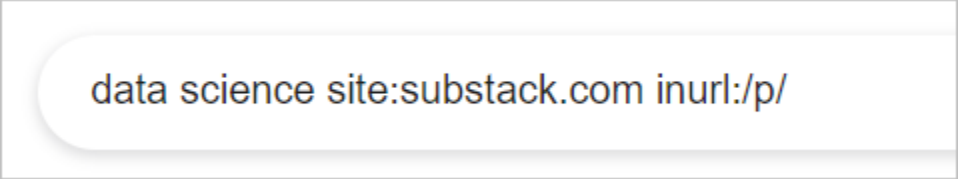
This makes the content generic and has no differentiation.

Instead, search on niche communities, and social media platforms where individuals share insights on the topic without thinking about SEO.

For example:

- Hashnode
- Reddit
- Quora
- IndieHackers (your topic + site:IndieHackers.com)
- Substack newsletters from experts (your topic + site:substack.com inurl:/p/)

Example:

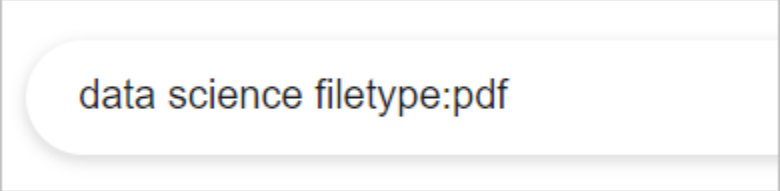


data science site:substack.com inurl:/p/

- LinkedIn posts by experts (search with the keywords)
- Twitter posts (search with the keywords)
- Recommended: YouTube video interview of an expert on the topic (get transcription and get a summary from ChatGPT to save time)
- And so on...

Another tip to get unique insights for your content research is by looking at PDF documents on the topic.

For example, searching Google: Your topic + filetype:pdf



data science filetype:pdf

This will show all available PDFs on your searched topic.

The idea is to get unique research points to get content ideas. This way, your answer will be unique and insightful.

## **Action Items:**

### **Diversify Research Sources:**

- Explore niche communities, social media platforms, and industry forums.
- Examples: Hashnode, Reddit, Quora, IndieHackers (use "your topic + site:IndieHackers.com")

### **Tap into Expert Networks:**

- Use LinkedIn and Twitter to find posts and discussions by industry experts.
- Search with relevant keywords for valuable insights.

### **Subscribe to Newsletters:**

- Use Substack newsletters using advanced search: "your topic + site:substack.com inurl:/p/" — to get expert insights

### **Explore Multimedia Content:**

- Watch YouTube video interviews with experts.
- Utilize ChatGPT to summarize key points from video transcriptions.

👉 Use [NoteGPT](#) or alternatives to get YouTube video summary and use this as a content research source.



## YouTube Video Summarizer

Get YouTube transcript and use AI to summarize YouTube videos in one click for free online.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OREd4PPWCyY>

Generate Summary

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The video title is "The Daily Practice That Has Changed My Life & Income (1 Change ...)". The video player has a large "EPR PROGRAM" overlay. The video player interface includes "Watch later" and "Share" buttons. To the right, a "Summary" panel is visible, containing a transcript and a list of highlights.

**Summary**

The video script discusses the mindset problem that many designers face, limiting their potential and preventing them from achieving greater success. It emphasizes the importance of changing this fixed mindset and being open to new possibilities and opportunities. The script also shares the personal journey of the speaker, highlighting the role of belief systems in shaping one's actions and outcomes.

**Highlights**

- 0:29 🗨️ The script discusses the mindset problem that restricts designers from reaching their full potential.
- 1:56 🗨️ The analogy of fleas in a jar is used to illustrate how limiting beliefs can confine one's possibilities.
- 3:25 🗨️ The speaker shares a personal story of how his initial aversion to sushi turned into a love for it, highlighting the importance of trying new things.
- 5:04 🗨️ The video encourages viewers to approach life with curiosity and open-mindedness, challenging their fixed mindset.
- 7:55 🗨️ The script addresses the belief that

(summarized using [YouTube Video Summarizer with AI](#))

## PDF Document Search:

- Conduct targeted searches for PDF documents: "your topic + filetype:pdf"

The screenshot shows a search engine results page for the query "AI in healthcare filetype:pdf". The search bar shows the query. Two results are displayed:

**PwC India**  
<https://www.pwc.in> > ghost-templates > enabling-g... PDF

**Enabling healthcare with technology**  
With the government of India (GoI) trying to build a digital health ecosystem to foster **healthcare** in the country, **AI** will get more acceptance in the future.

**European Parliament**  
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu> > etudes > STUD PDF

**Artificial intelligence in healthcare - European Parliament**  
This study identified and clarifies seven main risks of **AI** in medicine and **healthcare**: 1) patient harm due to **AI** errors, 2) the misuse of medical **AI** tools, 3) ...  
85 pages

## Avoid Generic Summaries:

- Discourage generic content creation based on existing articles.

- Aim for uniqueness by gathering insights from diverse sources.

### Quality over Quantity:

- Prioritize quality research over quantity.
- Thoroughly understand and synthesize information for valuable content.

### Document Research Process:

- Establish a systematic process for documenting research findings.
- Maintain organized notes and references.

### Engage with the Community:

- Actively participate in discussions within chosen communities.
- Engage with experts and enthusiasts for real-time insights.



**Must-read guide for writers:** [Content marketing differentiation strategy](#)

Here's the sneak peek:

**Content differentiation strategies**

**1. Replace 'word count' with 'content depth.'**

If you have been using 'word count' to justify how much information you've shared in the article, it's time to replace it with 'content depth.'

Use 'content depth' to measure the information gain from your article compared to top-ranking pages.

**Here are ways to improve information gain/ content depth:**

**First,** review the top pages and list all the questions and topics they have covered. This is common that other results are also talking similarly on their page.

To get one step ahead, think of what topics or questions are necessary to the topic yet not covered by the pages.



## Final words

And that's the wrap of content guidelines that you can use to train your content team. Hope you'll find it useful.

If you want to discuss SEO and content marketing or need help in scaling your SEO growth?

[Let's connect on LinkedIn](#) or learn my [SEO approach](#).

— Sk Rafiqul Islam, SEO consultant and creator of Content Marketing VIP.