virtual
lunch & learn

Blog Like a Boss

Storytelling for SEO Success

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

12:00 PM

FREE FOR ALL AAF MEMBERS
$5 FOR NON-AAF MEMBERS

Carrie Cousins
LeadPoint Digital

aaf roanoke

Credentials

I’ve blogged ... a lot.

Started career as a journalist then moved to marketing and storytelling, with 15+ years blogging.

✨ 1,500+ authored blogs

✨ Publications include Fast Company, Square, Webdesigner Depot, The Next Web, GiveWP

✨ 1,000+ ghostwritten blogs *(I’d tell you, but ...)*

✨ Subscribe: https://authory.com/CarrieCousins

8 Marketing Tips for Nonprofits

3 Essential Design Trends, February 2024

How to Accept and Collect Online Donations in 7 Easy Steps

3 Essential Design Trends, February 2024

Stripe vs. PayPal for Online Fundraising

SMS Tactics to Help You Master Donor Engagement

10 Best Web Design Trends of 2023

How Technology Can Increase Revenue for Grocery Stores

Do Your Homework

What are you writing about ... and why?

What story do you need to tell? What should readers do after they engage with your content. You need to do some legwork and set a goal for every piece of content.

✨ Homework: Know who you want to talk to, what keywords are important, why they should care, and what users should do next.

Use Smart URLs

Yes, your URL is pretty dang important.

Smart URLs contain words that describe content, making it readable to humans and search engines.

- ✨ Contains your domain/category/headline
https://www.rbtc.tech/careers/rbtc-rolls-out-new-young-professional-development-program/
- ✨ Include meaningful keywords
- ✨ Drop stop words (the, and, or, of, a, an, to, for, etc.)
- ✨ Use all lowercase letters

Keyword^3

Keywords need to be used a minimum of three times in a blog post.

While you don’t want to stuff posts with keywords, you do want search engines to understand your content. Variations of keywords are ok, too!

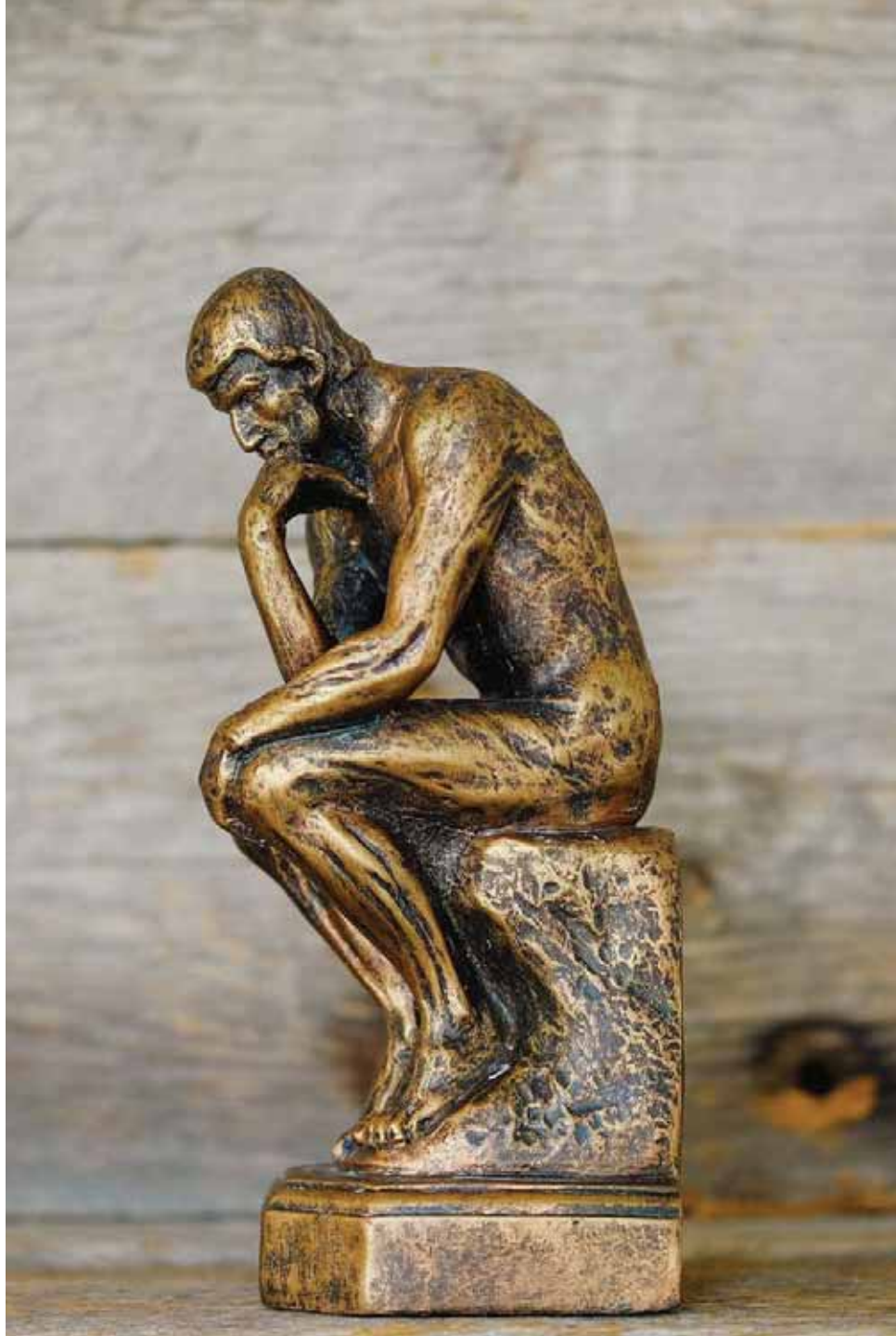
✨ Use the keyword in the headline, first paragraph, and a subhead.

1 Thought Per Paragraph

If you need 10-20 sentences to make a point;
it's time to rethink your content.

Themed paragraphs should be short and sweet.
Just a couple of sentences each.

✨ Statement + supporting facts, metrics, or quotes.



Clean Your Content

Content will almost always be created outside the CMS to avoid stray HTML in your copy. Search engines can see that stuff!

Before copy and pasting content from Word, make sure to clean it using TextEdit or Notepad. (Paste content and then “make plain text.”)

✨ It is still best to write your content outside of the CMS and not directly in the website.

Create Hierarchy

Every piece of content needs to use proper H1-H6 structure for accessibility and SEO.

The page title or header is the H1 and should be coded by default. Plan subheads using H2-H6 (you may only have H2 or H3), ranking content from top to bottom and in order of importance.

✨ Don’t forget to use your primary keyword in the H1 and H2 or H3.

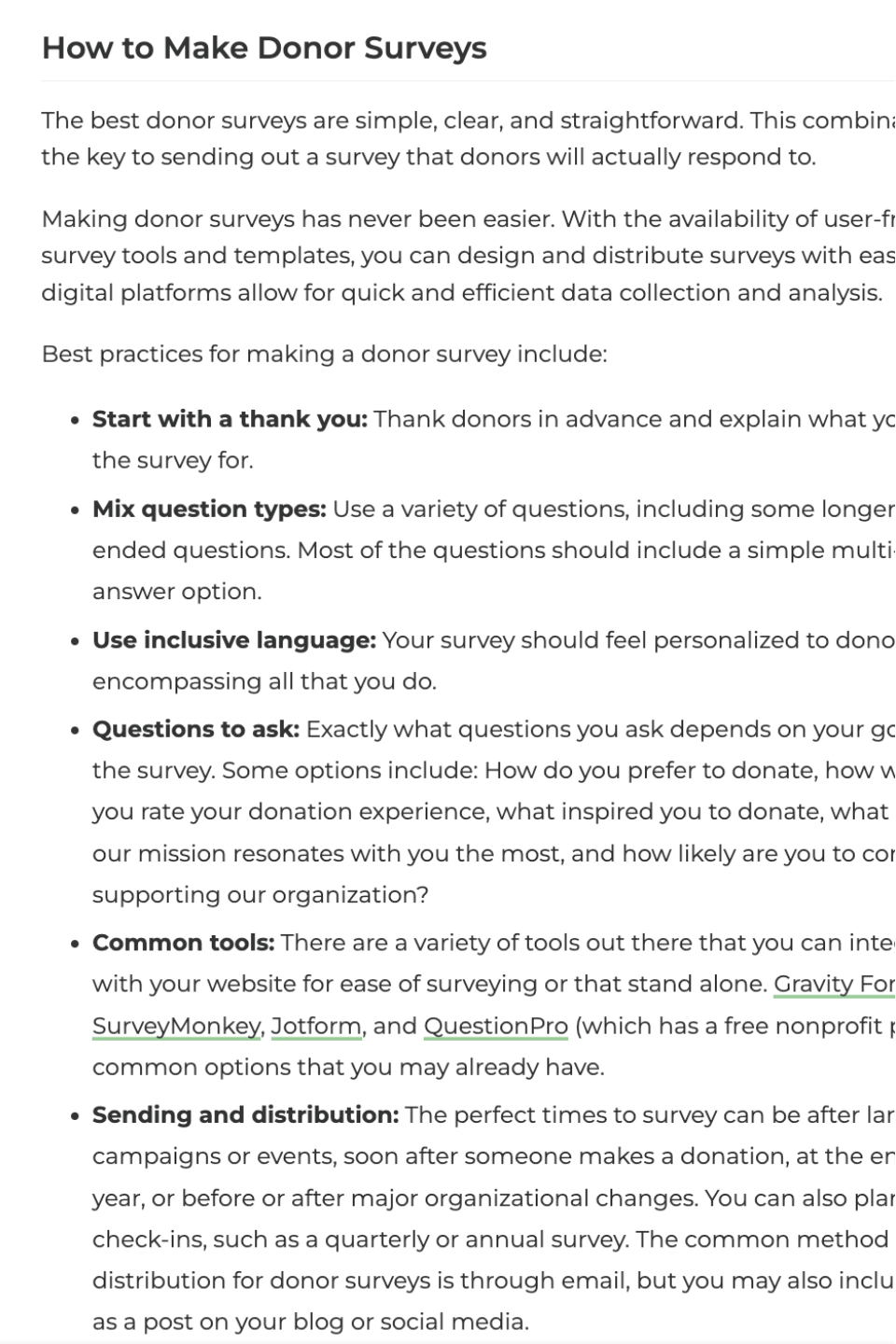
Use Subheads + Lists

Scannable content is easy for humans to read and creates entry points for comprehension.

Humans have less attention span than a goldfish!* That means you have to offer plenty of ways to get the point of a blog post.

✨ Use subheads to break up the main copy. Think one for every new big idea or every 4-5 paragraphs.

✨ Use lists to highlight succinct groups of ideas.



How to Make Donor Surveys

The best donor surveys are simple, clear, and straightforward. This combina the key to sending out a survey that donors will actually respond to.

Making donor surveys has never been easier. With the availability of user-fr survey tools and templates, you can design and distribute surveys with eas digital platforms allow for quick and efficient data collection and analysis.

Best practices for making a donor survey include:

- **Start with a thank you:** Thank donors in advance and explain what yo the survey for.
- **Mix question types:** Use a variety of questions, including some longer ended questions. Most of the questions should include a simple multi- answer option.
- **Use inclusive language:** Your survey should feel personalized to dono encompassing all that you do.
- **Questions to ask:** Exactly what questions you ask depends on your go the survey. Some options include: How do you prefer to donate, how w you rate your donation experience, what inspired you to donate, what our mission resonates with you the most, and how likely are you to cor supporting our organization?
- **Common tools:** There are a variety of tools out there that you can inte with your website for ease of surveying or that stand alone. Gravity For SurveyMonkey, Jotform, and QuestionPro (which has a free nonprofit p common options that you may already have.
- **Sending and distribution:** The perfect times to survey can be after lar campaigns or events, soon after someone makes a donation, at the en year, or before or after major organizational changes. You can also plar check-ins, such as a quarterly or annual survey. The common method distribution for donor surveys is through email, but you may also inclu as a post on your blog or social media.

Accessible Content Wins

Images need to be understood by screen readers and other tools; they need text descriptions.

Add an alt description for every photo. This should be short and contain text that describes what is in the image. Do not stuff with keywords!

✨ Accessibility leads to better SEO because your website is more usable with elements that can be “read” by search engines.

Uploaded on: January 15, 2024
Uploaded by: Carrie Cousins
Uploaded to: Lab Space Available
File name: shared-lab-space.jpg
File type: image/jpeg
File size: 2 MB
Dimensions: 2048 by 1365 pixels

Alternative Text: person working in a lab

Learn how to describe the purpose of the image. Leave empty if the image is purely decorative.

Title: shared-lab-space

Caption:

Description:

Keyword Check

The most readable content includes multiple entry points – photos, bullet lists, subheads, links, etc.

Make sure your primary keyword shows up in some of these locations. It should feel natural and not stuffed.

✨ Too many links makes a page/post feel spammy. Stick to a couple of relevant links that use natural, descriptive words for linking (not “click here”).

GET TO WORK ON A NEW CONSTRUCTION CAREER

With October's designation as Careers in Construction Month, now is the perfect time to consider how a construction career can take you to new heights. Carter Machinery knows the importance of spreading the word about the demand for construction jobs. According to Build Your Future – an advocacy group for the construction industry – there...

Read More >>

Image Size Matters

Photo sizing impacts page load and social sharing!

Photos should be sized for the space and page where they are used – don’t upload full-size images! Video works best when linked from YouTube or Vimeo, not directly uploaded.

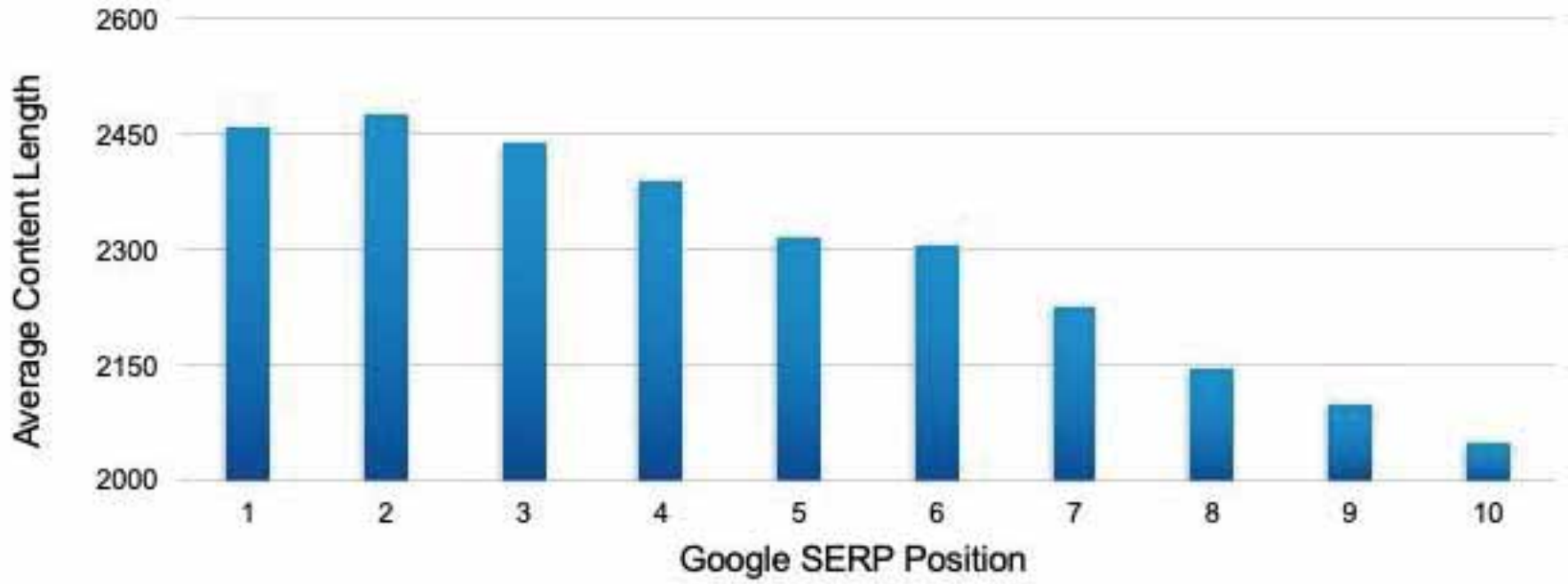
✨ Make images work for you by cropping to 1200x628; they render beautifully on social media.

✨ Try tinypng.com to compress images.

Think Length + Format

Did you know that a post that's too short or too long can be ineffective?

Aim for blog posts that are no less than 300 words, but 2,000 words is ok for more in-depth (long-form) content.

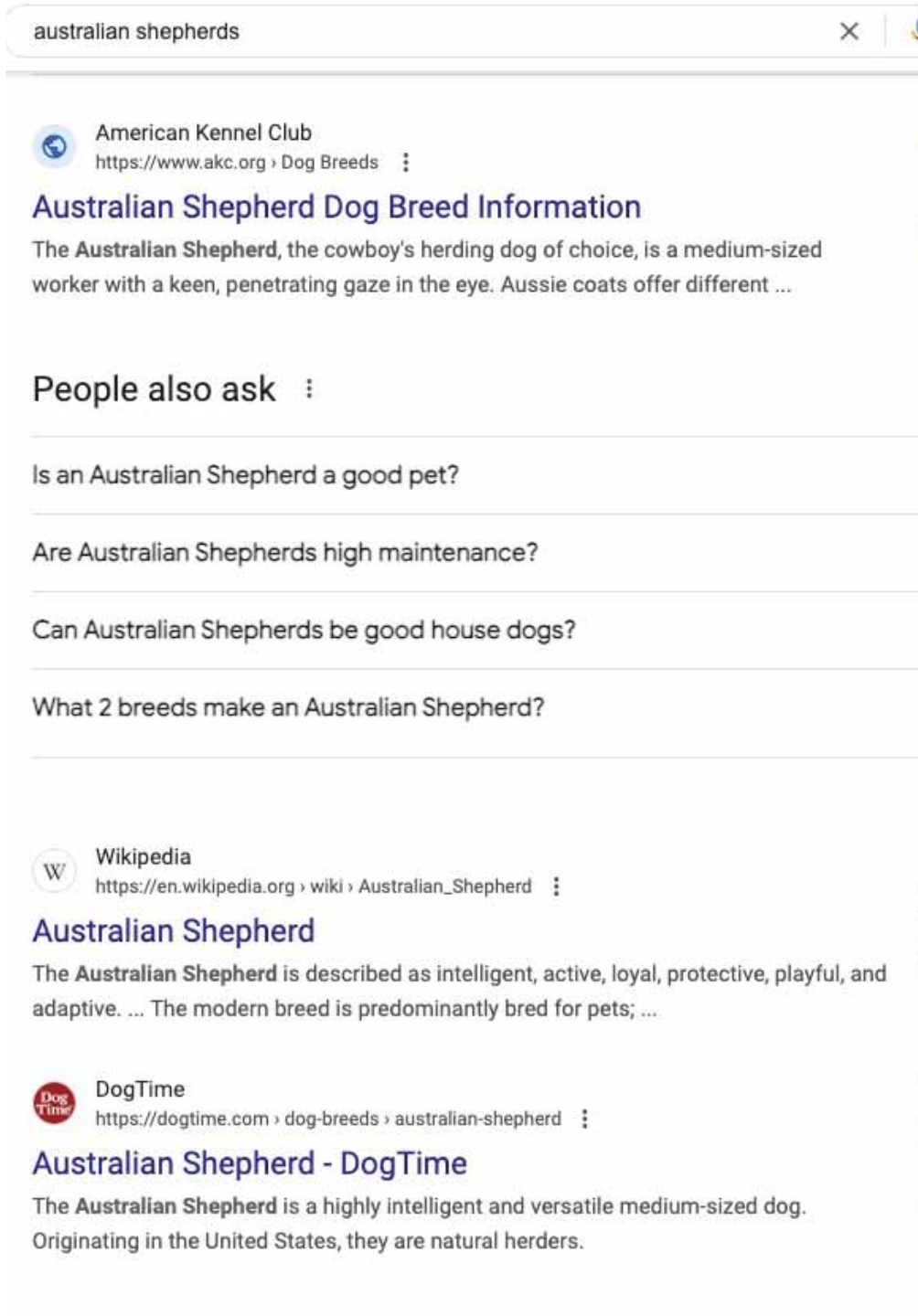


Use a Tool to Help

Help Google – and users – understand what your post is about.

Make sure your content has a meta title and description. Use natural language and calls to action in the description when appropriate. (Learn more! Sign up today!) Repeat your primary keyword.

✨ Yoast is free and effective!



SEO for Vlogs (YouTube)

Many of these tips work for video blogs, too!

Video content needs good copy. Write interesting descriptions for video content – much like a short blog post – to help search engines understand this content. This applies to your YouTube channel as well as pages where you embed video content.

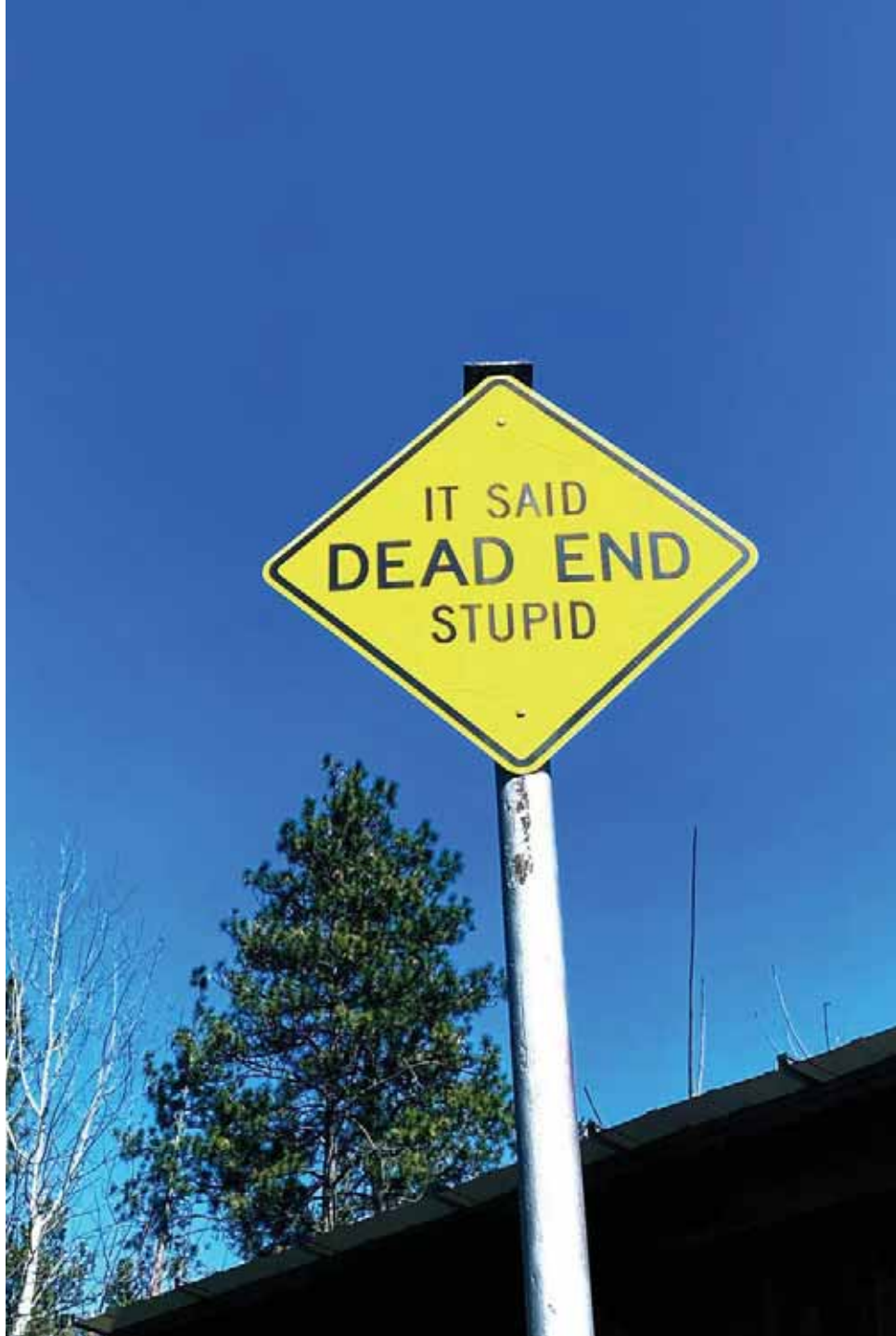
✨ YouTube SEO is a thing: YouTube uses keywords in a video's title, description and tags to understand what it is about.

Eliminate Dead Ends

No page should ever dead end, meaning there's nothing to do after you view the content.

The longer someone keeps clicking on your site, the more valuable the search query that got them there becomes. You are establishing authority on that topic.

✨ Add related posts at the end of each blog or something else to do on your website – shop, donate, interact on social, join an email list, etc.

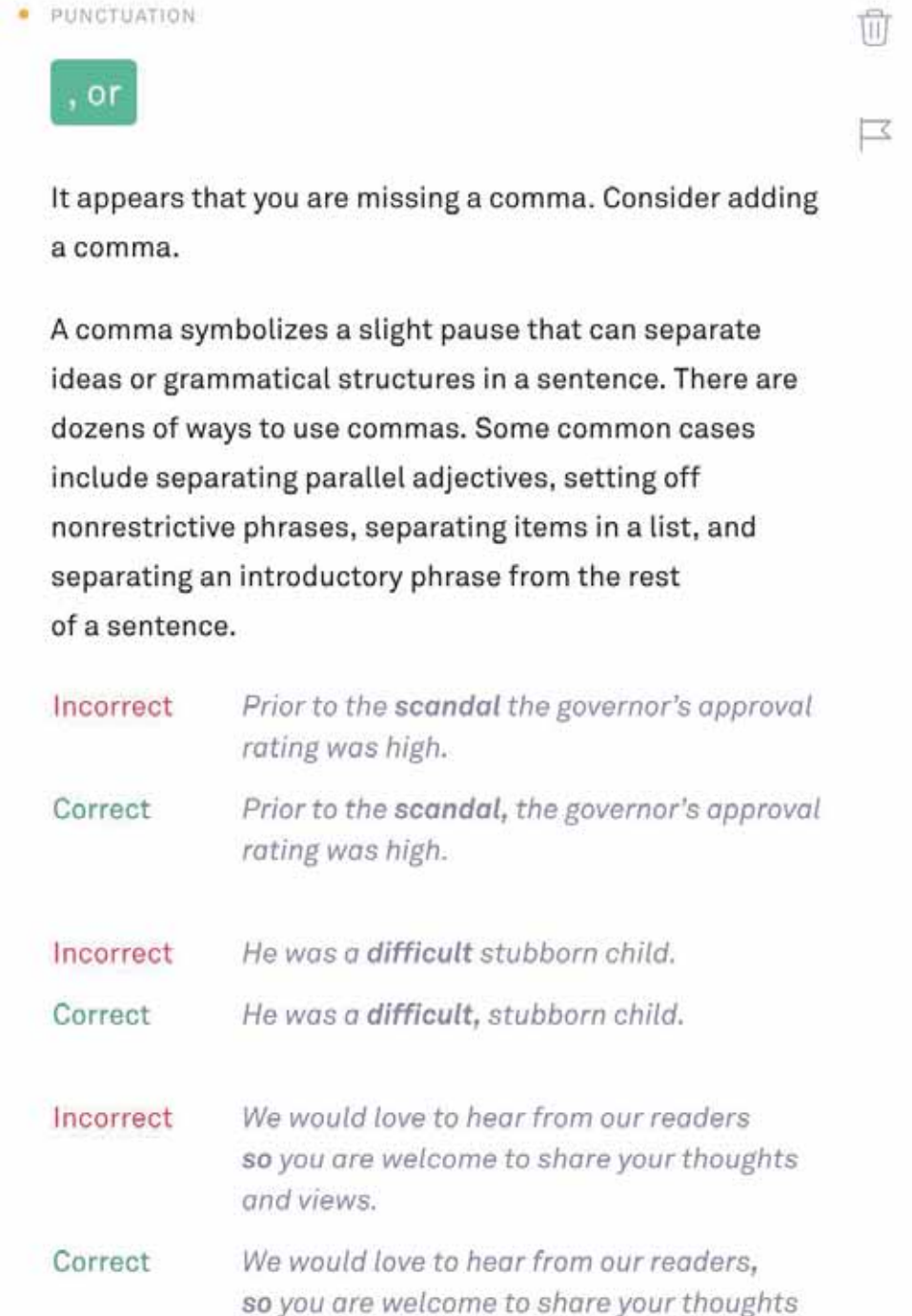


Grammar Check

Nothing makes your content lose credibility like an error.

Spell and grammar check again, even if you did it before pasting the copy to the website. Check EVERYTHING, including headlines, body copy, and meta titles and descriptions.

✨ Grammarly has an easy-to-use and reliable tool. Plus, it integrates with browsers, Google Docs, and Office products.

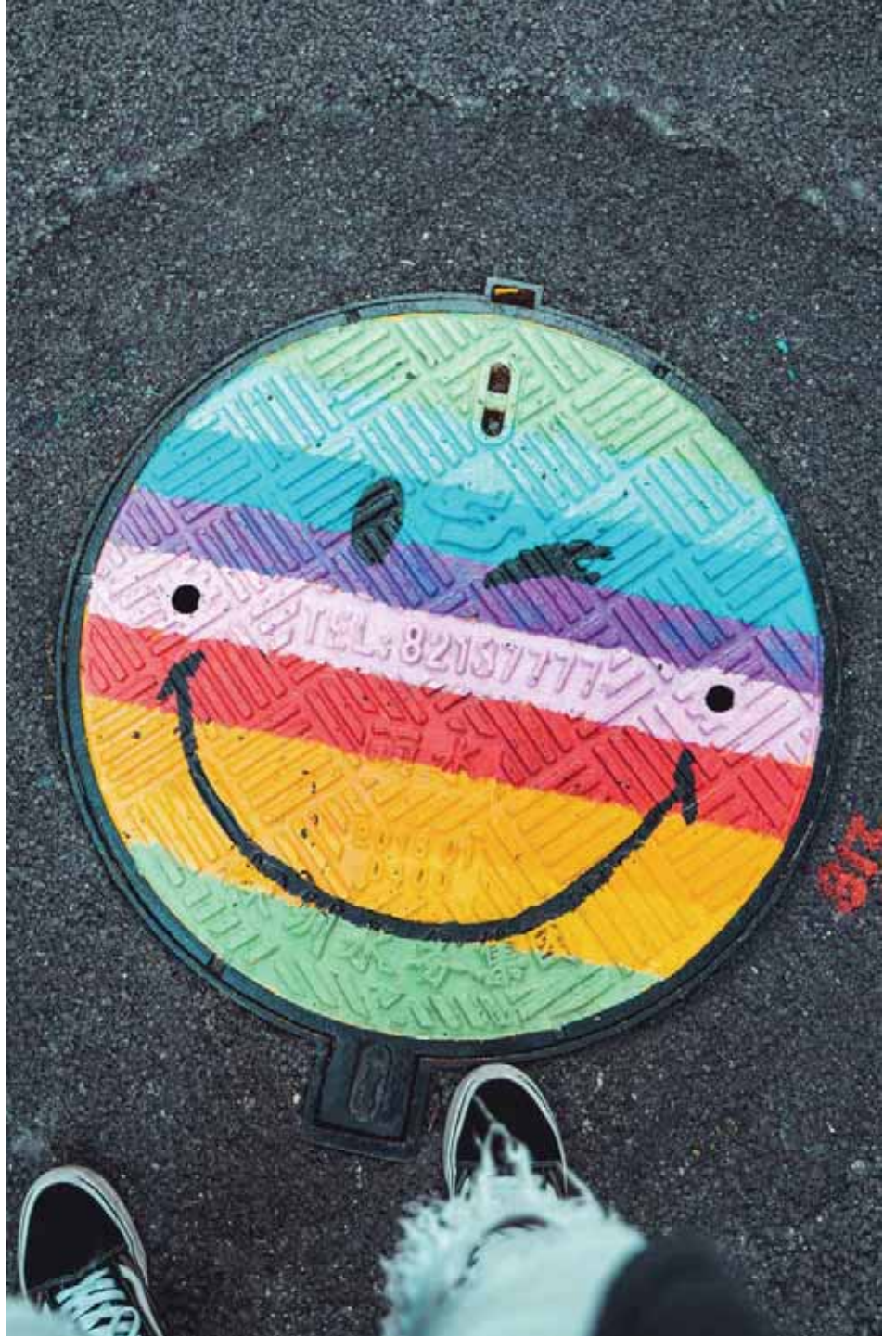


Proof It

Proof, proof, and proof again.

Before you can publish, you should proof your work and consider having someone else read it as well.

✨ Can’t find your own mistakes? Read it backward from the end to the beginning. (Trust me.)



Write for Humans

"You’re never going to kill storytelling, because it’s built in the human plan. We come with it.”
– Margaret Atwood

Write a good story – it has a beginning, middle, and end often with conflict and resolution – and you’ve crafted something people want to read.

✨ AI has a pretty distinct formula that can’t get close to the authenticity of human copywriting. (Plus, using AI could lead to duplicate content issues!)

Questions?

Carrie Cousins
Director of Digital Marketing at LeadPoint Digital
carrie@leadpointdigital.com
@carriecousins
https://authory.com/CarrieCousins
https://www.leadpointdigital.com/aafroa/