

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**

**AAF**® roanoke



**Carrie Cousins**  
LeadPoint Digital



# 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

February 29, 2024 · Article at GiveWP



3 Essential Design Trends, February 2024

February 27, 2024 · Article at webdesignerdepot.com



How to Accept and Collect Online Donations in 7 Easy Steps

February 22, 2024 · Article at GiveWP



3 Essential Design Trends, February 2024

January 22, 2024 · Article at webdesignerdepot.com



Stripe vs. PayPal for Online Fundraising

January 18, 2024 · Article at GiveWP



SMS Tactics to Help You Master Donor Engagement

January 18, 2024 · Article at GiveWP



10 Best Web Design Trends of 2023

December 18, 2023 · Article at webdesignerdepot.com



How Technology Can Increase Revenue for Grocery Stores

December 17, 2023 · Article at Square: The Bottom Line

# 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

## RBTC ROLLS OUT NEW YOUNG PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Careers



### COHORT-BASED PROGRAM AIMS TO EMPOWER EARLY-CAREER STEM WORKERS

If you're a STEM employer looking to nurture your young professionals, then you're not going to want to miss this new opportunity from the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council and the City of Roanoke.

ChangeMakerZ is an incentivized professional development program for early-career biotechnology and technology professionals and is set to begin June 2024. The program, powered by the City of Roanoke and run by RBTC, is packed with exciting opportunities to learn new skills and grow a supportive network of industry leaders and peers. Participants who successfully complete the program receive a \$5,000 incentive.

# Keyword<sup>3</sup>

---

*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.

**H1: Articulat CF 8**

**H2: Articulat CF 40 Demibold**

**H3: Articulate CF 28 Demibold**

h4: Articulate CF 28 Regular

**h5: Articulate CF 22 Demibold**

h6: Articulate CF 22 Regular

Ramp Blue  
ramp-blue  
#234783

Ra  
ra



# 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 combination is 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-friendly survey tools and templates, you can design and distribute surveys with ease. Modern 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 you're asking about in the survey for.
- **Mix question types:** Use a variety of questions, including some longer-form and some shorter-ended questions. Most of the questions should include a simple multiple-choice or yes/no answer option.
- **Use inclusive language:** Your survey should feel personalized to donors and encompassing all that you do.
- **Questions to ask:** Exactly what questions you ask depends on your goals for the survey. Some options include: How do you prefer to donate, how would you rate your donation experience, what inspired you to donate, what part of our mission resonates with you the most, and how likely are you to contribute to supporting our organization?
- **Common tools:** There are a variety of tools out there that you can integrate with your website for ease of surveying or that stand alone. [Gravity Forms](#), [SurveyMonkey](#), [Jotform](#), and [QuestionPro](#) (which has a free nonprofit plan) are common options that you may already have.
- **Sending and distribution:** The perfect times to survey can be after large-scale campaigns or events, soon after someone makes a donation, at the end of the year, or before or after major organizational changes. You can also plan for regular check-ins, such as a quarterly or annual survey. The common method of distribution for donor surveys is through email, but you may also include a survey 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](https://tinypng.com) to compress images.

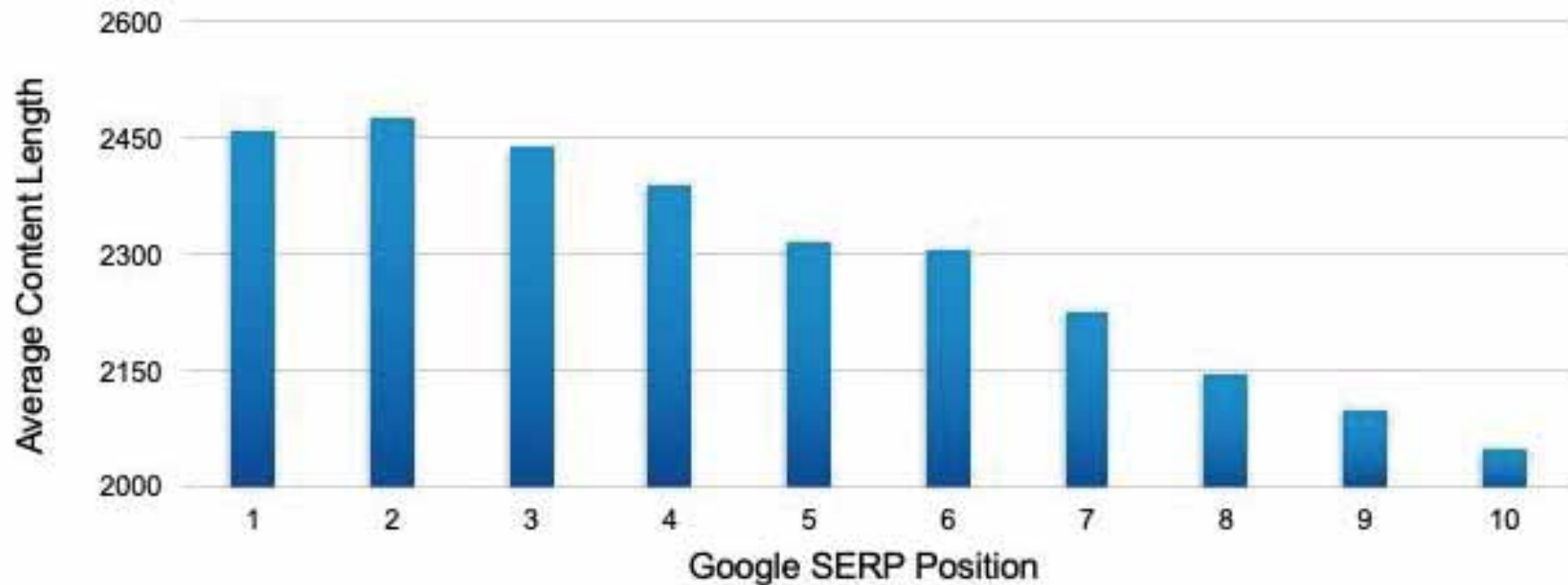


# Think Length + Format

---

*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!

The screenshot shows a Google search for "australian shepherds". The search bar at the top contains the text "australian shepherds". Below the search bar, there are three search results. The first result is from the American Kennel Club, titled "Australian Shepherd Dog Breed Information". The second result is from Wikipedia, titled "Australian Shepherd". The third result is from DogTime, titled "Australian Shepherd - DogTime".

australian shepherds

American Kennel Club  
https://www.akc.org › Dog Breeds

### Australian Shepherd Dog Breed Information

The **Australian Shepherd**, the cowboy's herding dog of choice, is a medium-sized worker with a keen, penetrating gaze in the eye. Aussie coats offer different ...

People also ask

Is an Australian Shepherd a good pet?

Are Australian Shepherds high maintenance?

Can Australian Shepherds be good house dogs?

What 2 breeds make an Australian Shepherd?

Wikipedia  
https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Australian\_Shepherd

### Australian Shepherd

The **Australian Shepherd** is described as intelligent, active, loyal, protective, playful, and adaptive. ... The modern breed is predominantly bred for pets; ...

DogTime  
https://dogtime.com › dog-breeds › australian-shepherd

### Australian Shepherd - DogTime

The **Australian Shepherd** is a highly intelligent and versatile medium-sized dog. Originating in the United States, they are natural herders.

# 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.



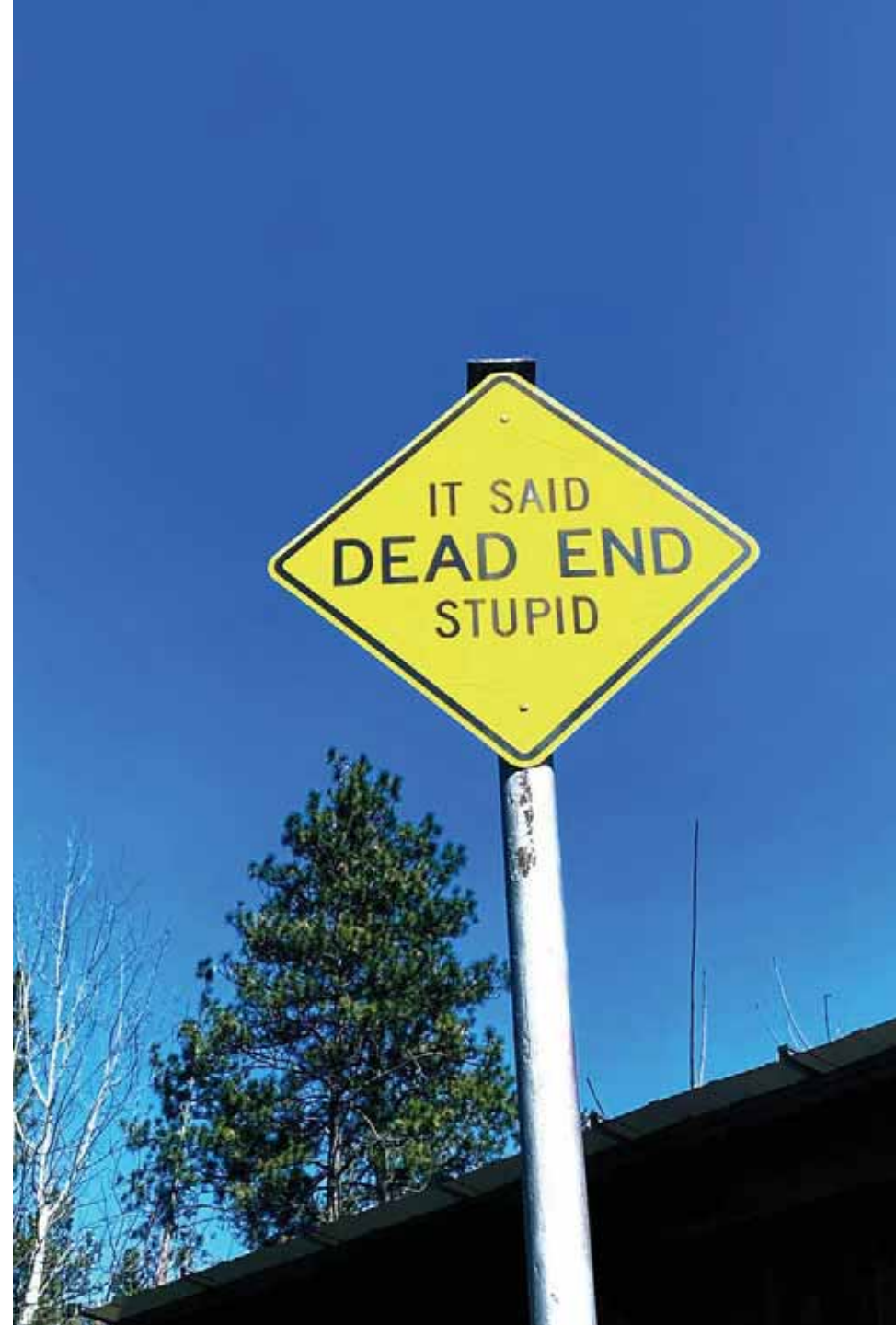
# Eliminate Dead Ends

---

*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.

## PUNCTUATION

, or

It appears that you are missing a comma. Consider adding a comma.

A comma symbolizes a slight pause that can separate ideas or grammatical structures in a sentence. There are dozens of ways to use commas. Some common cases include separating parallel adjectives, setting off nonrestrictive phrases, separating items in a list, and separating an introductory phrase from the rest of a sentence.

**Incorrect** *Prior to the scandal the governor's approval rating was high.*

**Correct** *Prior to the scandal, the governor's approval rating was high.*

**Incorrect** *He was a difficult stubborn child.*

**Correct** *He was a difficult, stubborn child.*

**Incorrect** *We would love to hear from our readers so you are welcome to share your thoughts and views.*

**Correct** *We would love to hear from our readers, so you are welcome to share your thoughts*

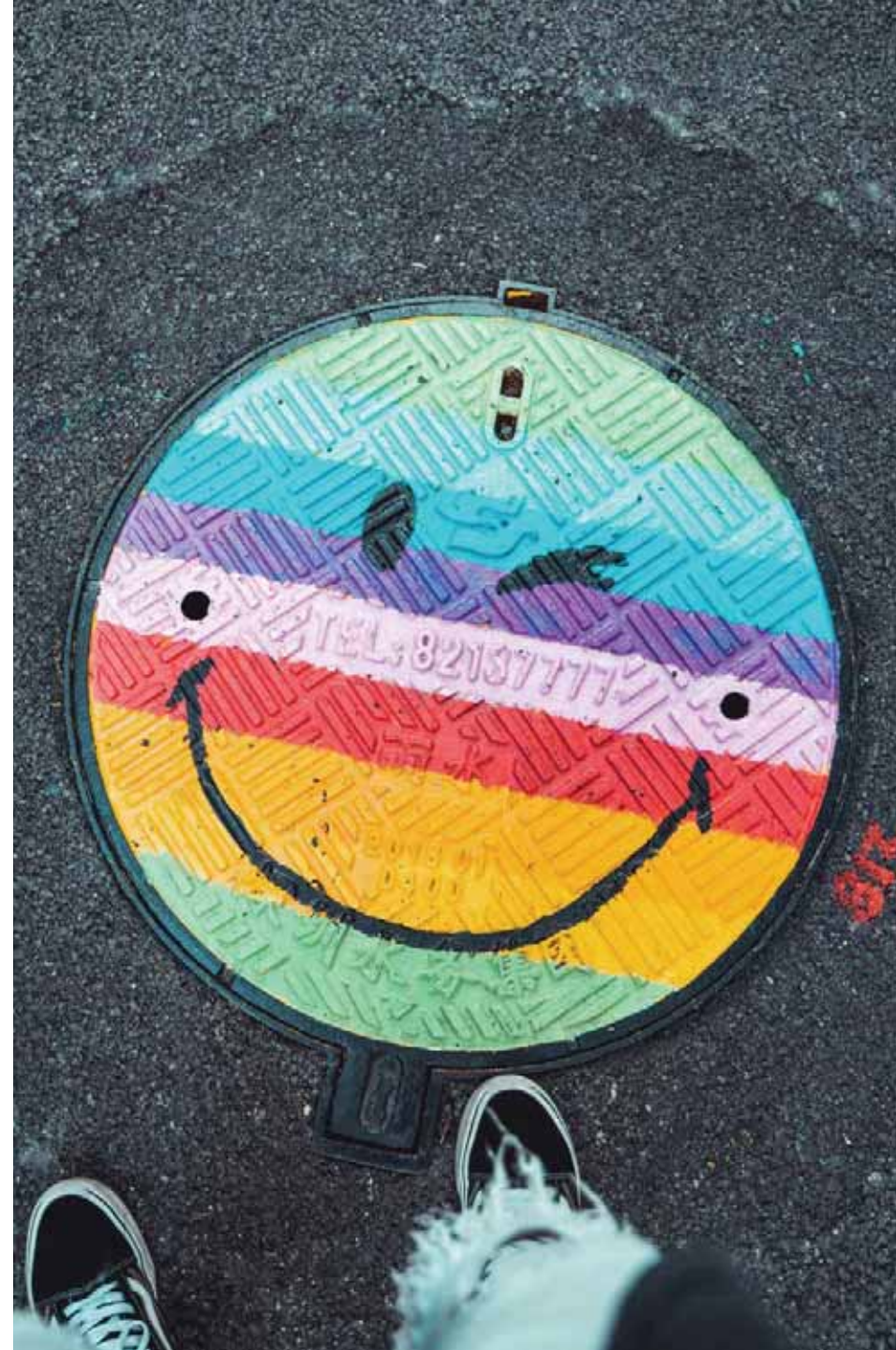
# Proof It

---

*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](mailto:carrie@leadpointdigital.com)

[@carriecousins](#)

<https://authory.com/CarrieCousins>

<https://www.leadpointdigital.com/aafroa/>