Why you still need TOFU content | Saskia Sarisin, Head of Global SEO @ Meltwater

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Show notes

My guest in this episode is Saskia Sarisin, Head of Global SEO at Meltwater, one of the leading media intelligence platforms out there. We'll talk about how Saskia and her team have built up SEO at Meltwater, how she thinks about pillar and cluster strategies at serious scale, how she's navigating the shift toward AI search, and why she still believes in investing in top-of-funnel content, even when that's becoming an increasingly controversial take.

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00:00 Guest intro: Saskia Sarisin, Head of Global SEO at Meltwater 02:04 What is Meltwater and who uses it? 03:55 Saskia's role as Head of Global SEO 07:25 A typical day in an SEO leadership role 10:46 14 pillar pages, 1,000+ cluster articles: How it was built 16:33 When is new content still worth creating? 21:03 First-party data blogs: Distribution and LLM visibility 33:48 Prompt sets for LLM tracking: Saskia's approach 45:07 Why Saskia still believes in top-of-funnel content

Full conversation

[00:00:00] I would say consolidation is an ongoing theme, so you always have to monitor because the SERPs are changing. Because search behavior is changing all of a time. How does these two things at LLM searching for consensus across multiple sources and then having singular data points? how does this play together ? i mean ,i do think that quite the authority in space that your operating in order get cited but it also helps to send out press releases and have it covered on other websites too. So when you look at these two things together, I think that's what works best.". Before we dive in – You're listening the Masters of Search podcast with me your host Niklas Buschner! Each week i sit down with some of the smartest people around the world in SEO & AI search.

[00:00:55] If you enjoy this podcast, don't forget to like and subscribe. And follow it in your favorite podcasting app or YouTube. It helps us get top-notch guests and create the best possible content for you. Let's dive into todays episode. My guest is Saskia Salschin Head of Global SEO at Meltwater One of leading media intelligence platforms out there. In this episode, we'll talk about how Saskia and her team have built up SEO at Meltwater. How she thinks about pillar-and cluster strategies at serious scale? How is navigating the shift towards AI search and why still believes in investing top of funnel content even when that's becoming an increasingly controversial take? I'm really looking forward to it. so welcome to the podcast Saskia.

[00:01:40] Thanks for having me Niklas! Yeah, great that you made the time especially for everybody. That's listening to this. It's just about The Easter weekend getting started so we are still up late. but For people who don't know Meltwater yet Could You maybe please quickly explain what your offering and What the platform entails? yeah of course. So Meltwater is a software platform that's built for PR communications and marketing leaders. And basically in todays fast-paced world, our clients are seeing firsthand how media coverage and social conversations as well AI generated content are shaping narratives and perceptions of brands or their competitors industries much faster than ever before. And Meltwater is a platform that turns those media, social and AI signals into intelligence.

[00:02:41] That clients can act on with confidence and showcase their results. So who would be like typical customer of yours? A typical customer? would somebody working in PR writing press releases for example was looking for a journalist database A tool that helps them write AI, press releases. That also help for search in a way as well as marketing people who are looking for LLM tracking software. we have lots of personas actually. Also if you're working on marketing and you need an influencer marketing platform We're the go-to platform. so it really depends Who You Are And what's your need? Okay, meltwater is actually quite big already. Right? So how many people are working at the company? I would have to look that up exactly but last time it checked there was more than two thousand employees.

[00:03:46] okay It's quiet a lot and what does your role in the whole SEO function Look like? yeah so um i'm the head of SEO globally. I'm responsible for the organic performance of a website across all our languages and regions that we serve. And, i am part of the global digital team at Meltwater. So SEO is more about cross functional discipline Across the Digital Team The Content Team Web Devs and Local Field Teams as well And I work together with all of them to make sure all requirements are met. and i mostly focus on the English website right now, where we have a team of content writers that I worked with. just ensure We Have The High Quality SEO GEO optimized content That is being produced for local languages like German French Japanese.

[00:04:49] we also have Chinese and I guide the local teams at a higher level there, like providing guides and strategic direction technical support. you know everything it entails. Okay so you don't do proof reading for the Chinese content teams? They haven't asked them yet. I actually had Chinese in school for four years but um i wouldn't dare but they didn't ask yet okay Great. And like, how important are the different languages? Because I think it's interesting for people to hear that you're operating across such a diverse set of languages from English with just obvious then German French and Chinese also. so is this something connected where customers are located or what has just grown into the Chinese market that you want to be more visible, for example in the Chinese market.

[00:05:48] Yeah so actually it was the other way around like we had way more languages than we serve with our website as well and we just narrowed down after some time. So yeah these are core markets but mostly in terms of clients. I would say That's how we got those languages, but the main focus is of course obviously the English one. and then um The other markets are also quite big internally. And Japanese you forgot that too. Yeah, Japanese yeah I just looked at their languages But honestly i'm still Figuring out how to differentiate? The signs between Chinese and japanese. everybody That Is like native speaker in these Languages. please Like i am super sorry i can differentiate Korean and Chinese, this I can but Japanese and Chinese.

[00:06:43] I'm still practicing. So let's get a quick question before we dive deeper into some parts because i know there are also people listening that maybe like two three steps already Before The position that you were for example. right now? Like they're may be Starting out or they are maybe like a senior SEO manager something like that And I know that for some people, it's always hard to imagine

how does the day look like? For people in certain positions. So can you maybe give us an average day from Saskia? How does it look from morning to evening at Meltwater? Yeah sure! It does differ a lot based on your company as well and what your position entails... just based on your position. But yeah, like an average day for Saskia would start with my morning coffee and checking rankings And AI visibility now as well.

[00:07:48] I can do check that on a daily basis Just because it's so interesting. Which tool you use? So we used our own tools GenAI lens from in-house that we use and for rankings I used Ahrefs. Okay, interesting! And then after you did that? Then i check the site crawl in Ahref's. I look for health issues like a daily crawl scheduled to run. so it is done when needed. basically every now or then something pops up which needs my immediate attention. very often its not. Then I, you know we have some lists. We work off just to fix the general bugs like links to redirects and whatnot. so i would update those on a weekly basis but i would daily check The Crawl for sure. yeah then i will also look into the search console And Google Analytics For A Quick Performance Check Just To See If Everything Is Doing Well.

[00:08:59] You Know Tracking Issues They Do Happen Sometimes. You just want to make sure everything's going well. Yeah, then I check my inbox—my mails of course and very often i do see some Sana tasks from the team where I am to review some newly published or about-to-be-published content based on our content roadmap... Of course for The German website! I do check it as well renowned in but mostly I also make sure that our internal links are being set correctly. That's something so important to me, but i like doing it myself! I have to admit... So whenever we publish a video, I just want to make sure the most relevant link is sent back to newly published blogs or whatever it is and probably work on research for our quarterly content plan.

[00:10:01] That would, yeah. Would be a daily task too. so like do a gap analysis keyword research creating briefings for writers and everything that entails. cool already sounds good. we have to dive into A lot of those. but before We'd do that I Have to come back To a point that you mentioned now pre-talk because You teased me a little bit Already on the content infrastructure that you've built over The last years with. i think You have to correct me if I'm wrong or, well. If I remembered it wrong with fourteen pillars and over a thousand cluster articles. so is that correct? That is correct nice then i remember correctly. can you walk me through how you got there? yes i can. um It was a long road to get there as you can imagine but it all started in twenty-twenty.

[00:10:58] So like six years ago by now And I mentioned already that we had way more local regional websites back in the days. That was a starting point of this whole strategy, actually because In twenty-twenty We were working on a huge website refresh like The first big one we've ever really had since i have been with the company and during that refresh Consolidated a lot of those languages and local website, made sure to have more condensed and organized version. So we went from I think it was twelve local websites down two five. that's where we ended up. And imagine That as project for content management huge, like we had so much content. Like even more than today and have a lot! So yeah... We had to find the way to organize it manage all of that content during that refresh in migration.

[00:12:08] And when you realize that Meltwater actually serves many different personas use cases that the best way to organize their content strategically was through a pillar and cluster strategy. That's just what served the whole purpose, best! And we started with our smaller set of first pillars. so it wasn't fourteen when we began with this whole thing. We start out with ones most essential for core offering For example, social listening media monitoring PR influencer marketing and grant management reputation management. I think those were the five starting pillars that we've had And We chose those based on search volume because I know you probably got to ask how he got there. So i'm just gonna take that question away from You.

[00:13:04] Yeah so if it shows Those Based On Search Volume So we did a very, very extensive keyword research because the idea of our core offering was there. And then we just had to see what search volume was there for all of them and that in combination with the topics that were mostly contributing to our bottom line as well so meaning generating leads and closing deals. That's how he got into the starting pillars And that whole strategy, it all started in a Google Sheet. It was very big pivo table with thousands of keywords mapped towards specific pillars and clusters and sub-clusters sometimes even subsub-cluster because we were able to go down so deep into those. That sheet is the beginning a content plan that served us for the last six years almost.

[00:14:09] That's why we had, yeah... It was like starting with a blank slate of consolidations and content there but you know start following specific content plans strategy which is basically beginning. all it then just grew over time Maybe a silly follow-up question, but just to be sure that everybody fully understands and we also use the same wording. What is a pillar? And what's a cluster for you?". Right! So when I say pillar it means very long form piece of content like blog post which serves as top funnel questions, keywords, prompts however you want to call that. So it's talking very high level about a topic but its talking about every single piece of it. so we have a pillar like the PR pillar would say what is PR?

[00:15:17] What does it mean why is important and how do I put in place mentioning all of these without going in too deep, because that's where the cluster articles come in. That you would link to from within each of those paragraphs that fit them topic-wise. and we also have category pages like hubpages for those pillars and clusters. yeah but I don't call... Like i would call those category pages..I know some people will call those maybe the pillar pages But Those For Me are Category pages you know that host your pillar blog post prominently and then automatically lists all the cluster blog posts underneath. And now looking at yours super big portfolio that you've built up over the years, but them remembering that just said what does a classic day look like it still looks like?

[00:16:16] or it entails reviewing newly produced content etc. so how do you think about Is it still worth creating this new piece of content? or how do you approach consolidation? So there are a lot of questions that comes to mind. Let's maybe start with, How Do You Decide What is Still Worth Creating Newly?". Yeah! That's really good question and I mean since we have so much content already producing new content hasn't been our focus for awhile. but i must say Now that we have moved into the LLM tracking space with our, it's called Jenny Eye Lens. The product we've just launched and That means that we also moved in to a whole new space topic-wise And we haven't been there before of course. So that opened up a whole different direction Topical direction as well as a pillar With clusters.

[00:17:20] We hadn't tackled them. Back to your question, I'd say product development is a big driver for NetU content. So whenever there's some new development happening from the product side that we haven't covered yet? That is something that we would check and uh...that very often worth it! And on the other hand We're also producing data blogs. so those are blogs, using our own media monitoring software and reporting a dashboard functionalities that we have to produce like time sensitive trend checking pieces really because it helps showcase what are products can do. And you're always on new topics when they emerge. Examples would be we had a series about the Olympic Games, like the media coverage of Olympic games and certain disciplines within that.

[00:18:25] We also have something about the labubu hype when it happened or AI visibility index blogs for specific brands or industries—something. Those are two different ways to approach it, but in terms of deciding still if a topic is worth or not because that doesn't necessarily mean we have to tackle everything. You know as I said We have multiple teams working on and so we always decide the strategic direction together Because there's so much that plays a role more than just me as such volume. And But you know If we In that team decided a topic or strategic direction in terms of topics like

the new GEO pillar that we've just tackled. If we and the whole team decide it's worth to go there, then next step would be keyword analysis on my part or teams' part And I know people still wouldn't do this anymore!

[00:19:31] I have heard lots different opinions about that. Personally i'm still fan of getting grasp What the public thinks what they are searching for it does. It doesn't mean that you have to trust The data one hundred percent or if there is no search volume For something, but There Is none like I've seen different as well when i look into our Search Console and compare That with hrefsdata for example. And But just You know From a research standpoint? You Have To Start Somewhere. so i still start there um and then Like. very important is the server analysis. i would do Just to understand what is ranking currently, how do the pages look like? What type of content is it. What format is needed. Is that something we can provide with our content as well?

[00:20:24] and if so... That's important! Can we also add extra value? because If We Can't then maybe we shouldn't go there but if we can its definitely worth it. strategic focus in terms of the bottom line. So does, you know is that a relevant topic? That also will generate leads at end-of-the day even if it's through nurturing down but must be relevant in that sense too. Let's tap into data blocks part real quick because I found like their response was super helpful already But i found this part very interesting. I think that's something, especially companies who have proprietary data or tools to produce proprietary data. Think about more and more. How do you distribute those? Are they also built for search distribution... ...or are distributed in a different way like via social or something else?".

[00:21:32] Yeah it is all of this! We also have a team working on social posts. So they are very good material for that, and they work very well with all of the infographics in little imagery as well. And so that's one part of it. we also send out press releases using that data just to get picked up by other websites as well . Of course I'll search these types of content pieces, they work very well for LLM visibility as well. So when we look at the top let's say content formats that are being cited from our end it is like the first party data blogs and tool lists or comparisons. That type of content works really well. so its all about. And what do you think why that is the case? Because people like to ask AI chatbots for stuff where the AI wants to surface some data.

[00:22:44] or Why does it happen. Yeah, I think its that. but It's also that You provide value That something nobody else has. So somebody have to be asking otherwise Doesn't matter at all. But we all don't have that data as well, right? Nobody really knows what people are prompting LLM yet. So um... We assume that is happening but again I think the moment you provide additional value to a topic nobody else has That's when LLMs start citing actually in old pieces of content also applies to thought leadership. Very interesting. Have you thought about, because I stumbled upon this idea of LLMs searching for consensus so they need multiple sources? This is why you want to be mentioned across multiple citations so that your brand shows up very simply put.

[00:23:54] but then on the other hand i see first-party insights and like fresh data are also seeing great success. So help me with your thoughts, in your expertise. how does these two things LLM searching for consensus across multiple sources? And then having singular data points How does this play together? I mean i do think you have to have quite the authority operating in order to get cited for that if there is no consensus around it. But of course, it also helps to send out press releases and have it covered on other websites too. so when you look at these two things together I think Talk about your data so that you're not the only one talking about your date, but basically everybody starts talking about it.

[00:25:03] right perfectly put. Okay, great. Yeah that makes a lot of sense because you know sometimes You have this twinkle in your head and you try to make sense Of different concepts

especially with his new technology And it's just not so easy. So This is very good point. Speaking off authority I think he mentioned A super important keyword there. Why do you think that, for example, Meltwater has this authority? That you are seeing these benefits also from LLM driven search AI Search. Do you think it's connected to the amount and value of content built up over years or is due something else about that? I think the Meltwater website is quite old as well. we didn't created yesterday. So there is some history to it, and we've always had our core functionalities listed on the website as well.

[00:26:08] so we never like you know... Some tools they switch directions pretty much And then um.. They talk about different products that are serving and all of that We sticked uh.... To out core offering. I think thats an important part. A lot comes from earned media. So, you know, backlink profile. Maybe not even only links but also how do other websites and sources talk about meltwater? And what are they mentioning really...and of course links is even better! But it's a whole picture that you draw and nowadays including social media like anything that is crawlable basically lines up across all of the different sources there are, then you get that authority and it builds over time. So its both of those I assume.

[00:27:07] Very interesting. maybe a quick note from me here also on this point. So you were very consistent in the value proposition of mud, water. obviously portfolio expanded. I had Felix Welkenbach on the podcast. he is a director product off search and discovery at home to go that travel company and he talked about some interesting experiments they did around sentiment tracking and narrative tracking. so how home-to-go is perceived as a brand? And he found A lot of responses. basically saw home to go as being like a price leader or very good on prices, etc. And from his perception this was also connected to their early value proposition when they were still a meta search engine. so basically not having on top of other platforms like booking.com and not Airbnb, but like Airbnb style platforms.

[00:28:20] it was very interesting because they already pivoted away from that quite long ago. But if you're a company at least has reached certain point of relevance with media coverage etc. I mean there are also publicly traded then probably in some way This early value proposition found its way into LLM training data, probably. So this is also something that maybe some companies have to think about if they just do their pivots? Um so how do you shape the narrative then? I mean That's something that um Is. maybe just a side note here one where it's true It's really hard too to reshape it. two like to get it out of there. I mean, out of the training data is almost impossible unless you scrape the internet for the next time they get trained.

[00:29:13] But who can do that? You really have to think about it and just try to be as clear, persistent or focused on those same things wherever you talk with your brand but also when others are talking like trying to shade their narrative so we don't need them and put out a fire. But how do you think about that now looking at your new product offering, for example with the AI Search Monitoring? Because I could imagine if people ask Attachability Claude whatever what does the Meltwater Suite include? or what is Meltwater best used for? Or I am XYZ company. we're thinking of getting Meltwater. would you recommend it? Have you done some active work in shaping the narrative around that? Meltwater is not only XYZ, but also includes this new great product.

[00:30:15] You should try it out etc., so maybe give me a little bit of your behind-the-scenes for that? Yeah! Of course... So I mean first of all we created a new product page obviously because there's still a source that LLabs will look at. They're like your own website. And then because I've, what I saw is that very often for types of prompts that you just mentioned something like that. not the website or the tool provider You want to get the info about Is being cited but other websites That are Like they have tool lists Or G two reviews or Something like that and so LLMs then prefer to look at third-party sources

regarding that information. Of course, you still have to put it on your website. so we started with the product page and also put mentions of our new tool into existing content linking back to their product page.

[00:31:21] just send some signals through the crawler really. And what was big in this list as well is a link out reach to see who has these types of lists, like which list are being cited for the prompts that are relevant for us and how can we get mentioned in there as well? To shape that narrative. And was it successful? so could you? or did... How did you track it? Like how did you compare maybe before-and after our...? Or if you have to report on whatever management level, what do you show them to say? Hey look, Meltwater is now also perceived with our new great product and we made it work. Yeah I mean perception is probably hard showcase but i mean What We Can Do Is Within Our LLM Tracking Tool we set up a promset for that new like surrounding That New Product We Have And Just Started tracking these prompts and seeing how visibility changed as well.

[00:32:30] As a number of citations from owned, like you can see all types of citaitons off course but there again it was also interesting seeing the number of earned citations going up in socials aswell because its started picking-up after work that we did for our own media stuff. Let's look at the prompt tracking piece A little bit closer for a moment because as you also mentioned earlier. So it's partly still the black box, because nobody really knows what people are actually asking. so we have these studies like OpenAI did with Harvard I think was Harvard how people use JetGPT where they anonymized a lot of prompts and then categorize them etc. but its still very broad i would say. And if come up with a prompt set, for example.

[00:33:24] You want to track how do you approach it? How do you make sure that is meaningful? because I can imagine like just random stuff being tracked but you have basically stand behind every prompt. so hey this prompt really makes sense because of ABC thoughts we put into that. So how did your project? That's good question. We actually had some internal slack agents that we can talk to about these things. I mean, not particularly but there is like a solutions agent and voice of the customer agent. so they use data. in internal sales data. you could literally ask them which keywords the prospects for customers are using when they talk about product XYZ. What are their pain points, what do most often want to know?

[00:34:30] About what moves a needle questions like that. so because we have these amazing tools I think our prompt set is really relevant Because we use internal data For it almost like I'm talking to a customer and they tell me exactly what they would look for. So that's how we can use them, of course i also looked at such volume in terms just keywords that are part of the prompts because it gives you direction or at least how you phrase things. but do feel SEO. people that like to call prompt tracking a black box are just too lazy. To put in the work, take the voice of the customer and then layer it some volume data. so they want back good old world where you could check Ahrefs or Xamrush with perfect data because now its gone.

[00:35:37] I mean, that was much easier. So much nicer to just use for reporting reasons and everything! It is kind of a black box still because nobody knows like even... You can't tell. so it IS A BLACK BOX. let's say that. but i STILL THINK THAT YOU CAN WORK ON GETTING TO VERY... very likely pretty close to what people are actually looking for if you approach it strategically. You will never know, but yeah... If you just guess and write down a sentence I think that's the proper black box. And uh.. The other one is maybe gray like more strategic approach. Yeah i would also say suggested prompts in whatever prompt tracking tool and do not put any thought about what a customer might ask. And if there's some volume at least behind certain topics, then it is probably not the best idea.

[00:36:47] but way you approach that definitely seems very reasonable. something I saw more being

talked about lately as whole personalization of search And also, like if you ask Chatchabity something then the memory is somehow being factored in. So a response that's more personalized and tailored towards you depending on what your used it for... For me where I have completely different context how do think about because mentioned at first quite a lot of different personas? How do you think about search and personas? And this whole personalization aspect of it. So we have our personas tailored into our Peloton cluster content strategy already, like there is always some pieces that target... Like they are basically sub-sub clusters off a cluster where will talk about the same topic but different angles different use cases or industries, even personas in terms of job seniority I would say.

[00:38:03] So wherever that fits into the content we have tailored it and is also something like right now for new content pieces within our FAQ sections if there's a blog And there are some options for us to go into that direction as well, to get more persona-focused. But it doesn't seem like the topic is big enough and distinct from our current blog. we're writing then either put in a new paragraph about or an FAQ section to try and be as targeted as possible without creating cannibalizing content because that can be a huge issue for us, As you can imagine. So yeah we have that tailored in like that And of course also We work with intent data. now That's not me but somebody else from within my team Trying to figure out how I best serve all our personas.

[00:39:09] Yeah, we follow the same strategy and I curve findings you would share with me. And the other way around so that we have a tailored in now? You put the ball basically on the penalty point for me. So let's talk about cannibalization content consolidation at all of that. So is this so? you said it's a big topic for your head could be a Big Topic cannibalization, I suppose. You handle It very well and Very smoothly? So its probably smooth sailing. but give us some. so enlighten Us please about how you approach it How you prevent it And how are you basically what you learned across the years? okay one big learning is that it's never the same. The SERPs are changing, effort-changing all the time changing. so when we did our initial research like a big pivot table I just talked about decisions we've made three or four years ago on which content pieces deserve to be their own content pieces and should rather like consolidated into one topic and then try to target multiple keywords with that.

[00:40:34] That decision now can be overthrown completely when you look at this again, so I would say consolidation is an ongoing theme. So we always have to monitor because the SERPs are changing Because search behavior is changing all the time. And um The way we approach it right now Usually if we're losing important rankings, like you know. We have our priority keywords. so when I'm looking at ten thousand key words on a daily basis but just the list of priority keywords that we have. and If i see that were losing them in my morning routine then The next step for me would be to double check the SERPs because very often why we're losing rankings is because were kind of cannibalizing suddenly with another page that was pretty close to it.

[00:41:28] But, you know back when we did the research this sort results they looked completely different from other. so I was fine but suddenly today that changed. So um yeah That would mean and consolidation on the two And then just checking crimp performance to understand which one is the masterpiece that we should keep and which ones should be consolidated into it. And yeah, I mean also annually uh... We are running a crawl of our whole website on our blog as well. then we use this script that checks our slugs H-ones h-twos and so on for similarities. It's like scoring system and if there are two similar, like the score is too high they would pop up. And then I get a list. of course manually always have to double check.

[00:42:26] that's actually true in the SERPs or not? very often That script is right. we should consolidate but yeah thats an annual effort on top trying act quickly when theres ranking losses. And how frequently do you refresh pages? So if you see something happening where you lose rankings and it's not

necessarily a cannibalization issue, so consolidation is not the right response. But the response might be refreshed to also have as default cadence of how often you refresh certain pages to ensure they don't decay and basically go down to the drain. Yeah We have different frequencies depending on which piece of content it is. So we have a, like I wouldn't even say if you... Maybe several. Several was good word for it.

[00:43:24] so there were content pieces that are important and they should be updated quarterly. That's the goal You know? Even just small tweaks but to get them back up in terms of date that we touched it last and updated it. So yeah, We have that on a quarterly basis. And then we have some content pieces. they are kind of evergreen but They still use data from let's say twenty-twenty five From last year. so for those blogs we always Have A task force or workforce That works On It during the Last Quarter Of The Year. So then we make sure that all of our twenty-twenty five content is updated to twenty, twenty six depending on what needs to be updated. Like some of them We have to touch a lot Of course if there's A LOT OF data being used or outdated sources Or something like That and Some of Them are kind of evergreen And Then We just need To Make Sure It Still Correct What We're Saying But We Update The Year Numbers And then, I mean anything in between if something comes up right we try to be as fast and dynamic as possible.

[00:44:46] So there's ranking losses. i wouldn't want to wait three months to get it updated. that should be done immediately. almost yeah. now let's talk about one thing you believe In that i would say based on what i read on linkedin is a rather controversial. take. You still believe in top of the funnel content? I would say please make your case. Try to be careful there, I saw that! First of all...I just want to make this clear- I do believe it's open content but for an internal linking structure because that helps build topical authority. And I do not believe in it, in terms of traffic and clicks or anything like that. So its a different angle. There are multiple reasons for why you should still have top-of-funnel content at Ill Authority.

[00:45:53] The way crawlers work no matter which crawler it is, like an LLM crawler or the Googlebot that comes by. They all work the same and which they follow links. so internal linking does help crawlers to sort of make sense of a site and discover other pages related with content. So in my mind there's no way denying. If those links painted clean and full picture of a topic as whole, it will be beneficial for providing the most topical context. So that's my first point. And secondly in terms of GEO AEO LLMs and AI search engines they love context. I think that's also something you don't argue about anymore. That is pretty clear, the context is king and i believe it entails intramal linking in content hubs which cover all angles of a topic including what is xyz and why we have an important piece.

[00:47:18] You have to remember that the basis for web search features, even within LLMs is still a search engine like we were used with Google and Bing. And of course way this data being processed it has advanced right? So there's more than there had been. but if you want break down We're trying to serve search engines. I just, also want to make sure i've said this once today. The principle of all content should be provide the most useful content for users. we're always trying to serve search engines in a way but like when it comes down to it. We want to serve their users For you know get them best content or whatever they wanna see. and still We all know that there are more ranking factors we have to keep in mind as SEOs, but serving the users is the main priority if you want to break it down.

[00:48:23] I'm talking a lot right now! But back to the topic... Topical authority of our website plays its role as a ranking factor on search engines? If we at Meltwater want to dominate a topic search engine, and in LLMs. I believe that we should cover it from A to Z making sure our internal links are as neat as possible just to paint that whole picture also for the crawler. And yeah this extra authority should in-the-long run boosts other content because they boost our topical authority. So... Yeah! That's why i

believe Tofu content is still relevant. As long as you have the resources for it, I have to say that too. so um It really depends on how much content you can put out there. What's your cadence? Yeah frequency.

[00:49:23] So if you do a post only one blog post per week maybe you shouldn't focus on top of funnel. i'm not saying that but Like we at meltwater were publishing five to ten blogs per week on the english blog which just a pretty strong output, so we have the capacity to do it. And I've also seen work like for our new GEO pillar. that was did whole approach as well Like We didn't stop doing what we used to do with this strategy working on that generic Pillar page and then creating the clusters afterwards all of the internal linking. picking up quite well their content. And it was an area where we haven't been in before, so seeing that works and get traffic to it also tells me the strategic approach is good.

[00:50:24] I feel like you already made a very convincing case. Uh, I could follow it uh...like very easily. so um but for my beloved audience boiling it down a little bit. So your basically saying that My super bofu great converting piece That might be called XYZ alternatives or best XYZ software. this will probably work better if I also have a strong topical authority, which is and also strong internal linking. Which is also driven by content that it's not only Bofu or like super high commercial basically final purchase decision. but there was also little bit more leaning towards the beginning of user research journey. Is that a fair summary? Yes, yes totally. Okay and if you would have to advise because I think already cancelled a lot of the questions that I would have had after with your disclaimer statement, because i was about to argue.

[00:51:45] But yeah but what about traffic? The traffic is gone anyway so unfortunately I cannot ask those. Saskia already gave super comprehensive answer. I'm sad about it too! Yeah...I think a lot people are. So if you would have so, If you would advise someone that is let's say starting out. That does not mean there are no page on the website or they're probably a couple of pages but Not a lot and not full blown content portfolio And They Would Have Like A Medium Resource Allocation. Maybe They Cannot Publish Five to Ten Pieces Per Week But Maybe They Can Publish Two To Three. How Would You Balance? the different content approaches, then between? maybe let's also imagine that they also have some internal data.

[00:52:38] So they could also may be do this like data block thing that you're also doing. so how would your balance? Between Bofu or commercial pieces Tofu early research journey pieces, data blocks? please give us a free consulting session in five minutes. all right here we go. What I would do is if we're trying to tackle a new topical area that we haven't digged into yet with our content, I would argue that without amount of content we can publish. And still want to start going down the funnel and not immediately starting to publish commercial bottom-of-funnel pieces. but really Like if you have that big picture already in your strategy, which I advise you to do before you tap into a new content area really.

[00:53:41] Then it would work my way from the top down to the bottom. so i would start with creating That tofu blog post actually like that. It could be the pillar blog post If You don't Have it yet or A more more focused sub-cluster that is probably still top of funnel, but targeting something like the best XYZ examples or something. I would start with a very generic piece first of all and then look at the scope how many other topics we want to cover in the Mofu area for example before Of course, not write all of them. And then in two years we get to the bottom-of-funnel pieces. know that it should still be balanced In a way but if you start from scratch I think You should Start with the generic pillar Then have A couple of mofu blog posts and then Have like Get started on The bottom-Of-Funnel!

[00:54:47] If you have That whole thing rolling already... ...then It can change Like. then of Course you don't have To push out as much top of funnel anymore, because you have that covered quite well already. So then you can put in like more bottom-of-funnel blog posts into your content plan but

initially... Because I've said that before.. Like i want to paint the whole picture with my internal links and if don't have that generic long piece of content at a start all those glossary blog posts surrounding it really? Then there is nothing to paint. Like then you just have some random bottom of funnel pieces floating around somewhere, but it's not really clear where they belong too. so I think yeah You should work on that That framework first and if you have in place than you can focus on the bottom or funnel blogs?

[00:55:45] I must say i think the data blocks...that Is something else because normally doesn't fall as much under the traditional pillar cluster strategy and also to us at Meltwater it's like its own thing. Of course, it falls on specific categories depending upon topic or tools that were being used but they are not originating from this whole strategy. And since they work so well with those first party data blocks, like if you can I would publish one per week as well. Cause they are great and the... Like those rules in my world don't apply to these blogs as much As to a whole new content pillar. So would you go as far saying that something like glossary content for example is The necessary evil still today of Well-functioning content strategy.

[00:56:53] I know, I said glossary content and i don't see it working that well, I must say It's not anymore...it did but not any more so..I think That was the wrong word! I wouldn't do that. actually Not Glossary Content But More of the. Yeah, I made an example with the XYZ examples, like the best XYZ examples for that. Like that type of blog post which is not even really mid-off funnel maybe I don't know it depends on the topic. It can still be top off funnel but it's a cluster A subcluster Of an existing pillar That is quite generic and very often doesn't contribute to bottom line But its still relevant. You just look at every aspect. That's more what I meant than the glossary. So yeah, thank you for saying that and didn't mean that Okay but then looking at More generally top of the funnel content would just say The Top Of The Funnel Content is the necessary evil.

[00:58:00] so You need it But you still don't really like It anymore? Yeah Exactly! Yeah i think people Needed yes in that sense not the glossary. Okay, but you wouldn't. why is it important like more than a glossary? Not just this forum content. that's what I'm saying. right we don't want definitions That's not. yeah. Yeah You wouldn't go as far as calling it evil. you would call it necessary But not Evil. Right It's not evil. Yeah i think there some sympathy It can be very helpful. Yeah, yeah. No I see that maybe it doesn't contribute to your amount of traffic. like you have to be able To showcase That and really make Your point. You know internally as well to get there by in And i know It takes some time. um i can See is worth it still?

[00:59:00] Yep okay i. Um it's a fair pushback so i Like that. thanks Thanks for that. Maybe let's wrap up the conversation slowly now. If you think about, like for yourself or your company? For your SEO function basically if you think of maybe next couple weeks and also a few months what would say are things... I'm putting this very broad deliberately. What are things that you see as priorities? So, things that your focus on where you already know. hey! This is super important for us and or maybe also thinks that you haven't fully cracked yet but we're here to expect it will be something that would become more and more important so can share some thing in the sense for our audience. Yeah, sure! First of all there is another Google Core update in the rolling right now so that's something we're monitoring very closely.

[01:00:12] normally I like Google updates as long they don't entail Google AI overviews and their go with your traffic. but in general the core updates... We have been beneficiaries those updates, because we try to be as helpful possible with our content and not spam or anything. So I just wanted say you only like them because they helped you? Because everybody that got punished hates them! Everybody that was basically in school... Yeah You did this very well Like here's an A plus Or a one-plus In German. Let's continue That way. Maybe that there will come a day where it's, yeah. But I mean in the

sense you just did your homework right? Yeah and You Did Your Homework. So It'S Also Fair That You Benefit From It Probably Like The School Metaphor Works Better Than I Expected.

[01:01:13] Beautiful Big Class. Its Beautiful. Okay. so Google Core Update What Else? Core update. And Then I Must Say That Is also Something Like the, so AI is supposed to make our jobs easier. Right? You have the option to create... To create... Supposed! And yeah let me make my point So it's extremely helpful in a lot of places already but something that I still want to focus on more Is working on actual workflows with like agentic workflows that work better than the ones we currently have to put it like that. I think, you know? It's almost doing another job on top of your job working on it and trying to get AI to be as helpful as possible and to increase your output in everything... You'd have some work in order for free.

[01:02:23] really You only have so much hours in the day. So for me, it's... It has been harder than I thought to actually get my workflows and the agents to work as well as i expect them too if that makes sense? That is a focus area still! And um..I think will become more important. you just need decide on which tool your gonna use because they're all overlapping. now everybody suddenly has like an AI chat included in their product that can help you do X, Y, Z or if have five tools and your tech stack. That allow you to create workflows And then you're like okay but which one is the best for my use case? In Which One Do I Use Or Do I Do It On My Own Using Codex. There are so many things. You Have To Figure Out Yourself Before percentage where it becomes like really, really helpful if you know what I mean.

[01:03:31] So that is the yeah of course thing. super cool makes a lot sense. i think also engaging into these kinds off projects experiments whatever make's a lot of sense. and this lake uh... really horizon broadening. i just also started working on stuff with cloud code. so We are using Claude as a company since November, but I just recently had something in mind that. Fast forward from that. A colleague of mine also started building something and now we are actually questioning if removing away form our project management system to building over own radiant OS, so Radiant Operating System because we suddenly see all the little disconnects between tools or something between Google Doc's and then copy pasting uh, AI and having something in ClickUp but then referring back to Google Drive.

[01:04:37] And all of that. so it really feels um So it can be this experience where you suddenly see things completely differently because You just know okay wow there are really no Limits anymore. if you can think it you can build it. It's just a matter of time and effort. That is very good sentence. Cool, now I have a final question that i always ask. the conversation has already been like very helpful and people can take away from it. more convincing point to make internally about top of the funnel content. But what I wanted to ask you finally is, What didn't we talk about that? We should have talked about. Um...I think we might not have touched on the traffic loss as much and as expected probably when talking found all of the content strategy that we have been so especially around a no creating top-of-funnel content and so on.

[01:05:54] I said it's not for traffic, that is clear. but i will still say this whole traffic loss point of AI overviews and LLMs just zero click search overall has hit us as well very hard. its frustrating to deal with because we've also lost an unbelievable amount as you can imagine, because our whole content strategy was meant to nurture people down the funnel and retargeting. So it's very sad just see that drop so much. but on the other hand I will say if we start monitoring AI visibility in citations now instead of only looking at search console organic clicks then there's also new KPI added to the whole picture. I think sometimes we forget that, so we only look at it from a lost perspective but we also want something new in a way.

[01:07:03] So for me personally It is fun looking at AI visibility and citations on top of normal rankings impressions And clicks And also like when you start working towards more AI visibility, more

strategically and you see that picking up. That is fun. so maybe don't look at it only from the loss of traffic perspective but we want some new KPIs to focus on and work toward. No, no, please finish. Yeah so also you know very often the users that you get via LLMs like LLM referral traffic. they seem to be pretty informed already and Very often ready-to buy. So even if it's much less traffic You get? It seems Like The quality is higher than it used To Be quite Often. so yeah That Is Another thing that I want to throw out there.

[01:08:20] Interesting, do you think on a last note maybe around that? Do you think Google will sooner or later also introduce something like Bing did in the Microsoft Bing webmaster tools where you can see the grounding queries and can see pages being cited... lack of clarity around what are the interfaces exactly that. That basically produced a data that we see there and, There's no connection really between the clicks in impressions on performance side then this AI performance site. but do you think that will eventually come to state where We will look at our conversations about everything being a black box and then laugh, joke. You remember the good old days when it was all black boxes? now we have full transparency so is that distant or near future?

[01:09:25] I guess this really depends on what these companies want to do with data Because that data is incredibly valuable right now. So I'm not sure if they would just start pushing it out like that, or if they'd rather want to think about how where... They showcase that? To whom they showcase and what you have to do in order to get it. so…I don't know whether we're going to be able to get all of this for free but maybe you will! Maybe you won't. It's hard to tell. But on the other hand, maybe at some point... I don't know. The open AIs of today's world might have to start paying publishers To use their content as well for learning experience. So it is all unclear still. And if you ask me It may be a little bit more distant Maybe because Yeah, the company still are trying to find their own direction in there as well.

[01:10:39] And before they just push it up with everybody because otherwise why don't we have that data now by now already? Like Why Don't They Just Give It If They Don't Have A Plan In Mind? So you think There's a greater plan but We Just Don't Know About The Plan Yet. That Sounds Very Evil But I Think There Is A Greater Plan. yeah i do. That is a great statement. Cool, Sostya thanks so much. we covered a lot of ground. I felt like time has flown. it's been really really insightful. Thanks for sharing So much about what you've built, how he managed that. How we optimize it? Are you looking to the future also being honest about the challenges? You see I could definitely imagine an update episode down The road where we also covered their whole traffic loss aspect in more detail and then talk About how basically nobody at Meltwater cares anymore about Traffic because That's a KPI of our Grandmothers and grandfathers.

[01:11:41] so-to say Um, but yeah. Do you remember son when we still had this traffic? Oh grandpa stop talking about this time. so um Yeah thanks so much. if people want to follow You or melt water and like stay up-to-date what's going on What's the best place for it? And uh, yeah where should they go? So we have a newsletter subscription on our mail order website that you can easily navigate towards. And I'm also on LinkedIn, just...I guess i will be linked somewhere as well so you'll be able of course in the description. yeah Super cool. Okay, so LinkedIn best place to follow if you want to see more of Saskia's work. I don't know If You're too active posting on Linkedin But if not maybe now is the time To start.

[01:12:41] yeah i'm not i should be. Yeah okay Maybe this Is The starting point Of something new. uh Saskia thanks So much for taking the Time has been a pleasure. Looking forward to catching up soon either in an update episode on LinkedIn or wherever. So thanks again for making the time today! Thank you Nicholas, it was fun and happy to join again if you have me! Yeah cool bye-bye.