You are what you EEAT | Lily Ray, Founder @ Algorythmic & VP SEO & AI Search @ Amsive

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Show notes

Lily Ray is one of the most respected voices in SEO. She even launched her own Substack recently to create a "safe space for ranting about all things SEO and AI Search".

What we covered in this episode

- Lily's launch of Algorythmic, her new consultancy, while staying on as VP of SEO and AI Search at Amsive
- The flood of AI slop in the SEO/AEO space and why original content is the only way to cut through
- Short-term gains vs. long-term risks of listicles, brand-vs-alternative pages, and scaled AI content
- How to build a meaningful prompt universe using GSC, keyword tools, PAA, fan-out queries, and paid search data
- Why EEAT and expert-led brand building still drive long-term results, and why Reddit, LinkedIn, and Facebook groups are increasingly cited
- The tension between ad monetization and the frictionless AI search experience, plus Claude's explosive consumer growth
- How Google's fragmented AI surfaces (AIO, AI Mode, Gemini, Discover) might consolidate into a personalized assistant experience

Links from Lily:

- Substack: https://lilyraynyc.substack.com/
- Algorythmic: https://algorythmic.co/
- Branded Questions for AI Search Visibility Checklist: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mQ8kuAZUkEUaKas6IwVDCODbvAJXhXTzpMZKA7BuPlQ/

Let's connect! Niklas on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/niklas-buschner/ Radyant on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/radyant/ Lily on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/lily-ray-44755615/

Full conversation

[00:00:00] The best way to cut through the noise right now is just continue to create original content that I can reference and feel good about methodology. Because, both search engines and LLMs are going to want to highlight you know... ...the original source of information. How do think this whole polarized

narrative in industry where there's not a lot voices with nuance? It feels like lots strong opinions on SEO vs GEO etc. Well, the first question I would always encourage people to ask when they see people having very strong opinions is are they selling a product that benefits them if GEO is totally different than SEO? The answer's almost always yes. and top pieces of actionable advice. If you enjoy this podcast, don't forget to like and subscribe.

[00:01:05] then 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. Lily Ray is one Of THE most respective voices In SEO. She even launched her own sub stack recently To create a quote safe space For ranting about all things SEO & AI search. So I'm super happy to have her on the Masters of Search podcast today. Thanks so much for joining, Lili! Thank you for having me. You recently made an announcement...I think at that day we're recording. it's six days ago That your actually are going out in your own and i think its such a big announcement. Actually It has gotten An insane amount of reactions unlinked In.

[00:01:54] Can you quickly share what this is all about? Yeah, for sure. So I've just hit about sixteen years working in the SEO industry including a couple of in-house roles and then most of my time spent in agency environment. Um...I think i have been working at agencies that last count but something like thirteen or fourteen years. And you know..for a long time now ..i wanted to take on my own clients um....and do my own projects. so ...i was lucky be able come into an agreement with AMSOV ,my current employer where I can actually continue my work with Amsiv. As, My title is VP of SEO and AI Search at AMSIV Where i help to oversee the team while taking on select projects in my own under algorithmic. so...my new consultancy.

[00:02:39] it's called Algorithmic! Um..I'm going be extremely selective about the types of projects that clients take on just because time is pretty limited And also you know have a pretty niche I would say skill set and approach, so i want to work with companies that are aligned with my philosophy. And how did you come up with the name Algorithmic? Yeah it's actually a name that i've had in my back pocket for several years now. um...I wrote about on the new website that I published, i have kind of an announcement. That includes how it came up with the name but It actually was a name that uh few of my teammates several years back we made like A joke menu for a fake restaurant or a fake deli um and called The Subdomain And its full of SEO jokes puns and plays on words and people's names and things Like that.

[00:03:31] Um...and deli was called the algorithms. So I was like, well that's clever because i focus on algorithm updates all the time and I've also been a drummer since I was six years old in a dj as well. so felt like a good name. So have been holding onto it for awhile And really excited That is able to launch with It. now With your new basically journey and The whole New chapter can you take us through? Like A usual day In Your life like Day of SEO consultant, SEO AI search consultant slash VP of SEO and AI Search at an agency. For sure yeah I mean we're gonna figure that out. it's going to be a interesting challenge but i'm very excited about actually because number one my team and I talk All day every day for years, you know i'm very closely aligned with my team and the clients that we're working with.

[00:04:25] I still have weekly meetings with them as well is like kind of mentoring. training a lot people on the team um then also thought leadership. so be continuing to do research in marketing behalf of amsov but Select projects that I take on again, you know. You have had part of my week allocated towards solving complex problems and helping select clients with their marketing activities. So i'm excited too That I have some new approaches And techniques up my sleeve for algorithmic but am excited to test out Have kind of like a new framework For approaching SEO & AI search that has spent many years kind of solidifying, and I want to work with some companies. I'm always amazed by how

people like you, for example or someone like Ethan from Graphite.

[00:05:21] How do you make the time in your day to be super deep and the trenches? Like also with actual SEO work or now AI searchwork And then still having time to do a very interesting research. so You publish a lot of stuff either on LinkedIn Or On Your Substack. So how Do You Make It Work? That's a good question. I'm constantly trying to figure that out and optimize my life in my schedule, uh...I would say funny enough the first answer to this question- I like to tell people is that i don't have children? That really helps! I think compared to a lot of my friends and colleagues and everything obviously going to pick up the kids every day and things like those could definitely take up a lot time. um..i do have a dog.

[00:06:05] thats'a little bit demanding but no children. Um....and you know I love what I do so especially lately with AI and specifically with Claude, I'm pretty obsessed of Claude. There's so many ways to create efficiencies in your workflow now And i'm also finding that it's really even sometimes in the evenings all dive-in and Create some workflows or have claud like co work help me With certain things. So I feel Like It's an easier time than ever To start a consultancy In The sense That we Have tools AI automations and cloud co-work, if I needed to go organize files on my machine. Things like this it used take forever. now its much easier. so a combination of being really excited not having children and um... Having AI help me helping speed things up alot.

[00:06:54] We might use this as a headline, like if you really want to master SEO don't get children. No just kidding! But definitely interesting. what would you say? how important is it for you do your own research? that then also guides the work? Extremely important and I'm actually working on new sub-stack. about my next one which The quality of content circulating in our industry right now, and a lot of poor-quality contents circulating and being cited in large language models on the topics related to SEO and AI search. And I think that there's a lot bad information circulating right now. And I even see it with my articles too, like all do some original research and then within a week you know i get a bunch of notifications for my name or just people writing about my article With Like All Kinds Of Things That Are Not True Or Things I Didn't Say Or You Know Rewriting My Article Without Using My Name.

[00:08:07] There's So Much Of That Circulating. best way to cut through the noise right now, even though a lot of that is quite frustrating. Is just continue to create original content I can reference and feel good about methodology. And also citing people who are doing that level of original research because over time, although LLMs aren't great at this yet both search engines and LLM will want to highlight their source information. And how do you approach it? because I always feel like. It makes so much sense, but its at the same time as i read in a book are. common sense does not mean common practice. so verifying claims coming to your own conclusions make so much since that is also a lot of effort. so if u like can you take us with you through maybe recent research project?

[00:08:59] you did like how did you started? how would you come up with idea? and then How are the first steps looking like? And how do you validate that, okay this is really something publishable. I can go out with it and also because i mean if you get cited You'll have a huge reputation to your name. so If you put some thing out people will definitely care. So there's also a lot of exposure on It and could imagine Some pressure put into it. Can you share A little bit about Your thoughts in behind The scenes With us For sure. Yeah, I mean i think the most important thing with all of this and I learned this early on is to explain your methodology in detail as much as possible you know? I think a lot of times listen like...I use third-party tools A LOT OF THE TIME IN MY DATA!

[00:09:49] You know..i might use Ahrefs data or Cystrix or similar webdata And alot of time people have issues with that data right?! That's perfectly fair. I think a lot of these tools are not perfect, they're not getting a complete picture what going on. nobody really is at this point. so i'm just being very clear that the data im using obviously when i analyze data or whatever and doing lots cross checks to make sure

it's accurate but explaining methodology if you have problem with It's not necessarily on me, it is something you can talk to the tool provider about. And I think at this point we all know that were working with directional data right? Once in a while i could do some research like anonymized client data but don't usually make that public because thats... We're not really able to do that with our clients.

[00:10:40] So yeah just being clear of methodology and transparent about sample size and things Like This. Just have be honest At this Point. There's no perfect way to conduct SEO analysis. I mean, even with like Google search console now we've learned that impression data has been wrong for a year right? So it's like We're all just working with whatever we have access too. but i would say Right Now A lot of my workflow is um Claude code or Claude co-work and various like MCPs That i'm using Um so Like um apis And mcp so like hrefs and cistrix in similar web and Search Console Data For SEO as well. You already mentioned the quality of information that is floating around and it's to say politely sometimes questionable.

[00:11:30] Do you feel like this has gotten worse now with the whole AI search, GEO, AEO industry basically growing compared to early days of SEO or do you think its just same but different? First of all, I started SEO in twenty-ten. So i can't exactly speak for like the early early days. you know have some colleagues that been doing this since the nineties and everything. it was a bit too young um but i would say back then It was less Of problem because even though people were expressing their own opinions And they're on analysis and their own experiences and Everything is just as much smaller scale right? Like almost like everyone knew, everyone at that point is a pretty small community. Now it's become so egregious with so many people entering into this space with little to no experience trying to strike gold with this whole GEO thing and then not only that they have AI tools at their disposal to create content effortlessly and scale really quickly.

[00:12:38] So we just had the scale problem where And then to be honest, it's working. You know I'm seeing some sites that are basically just like rehashing content industry content or even coming up with non-existent information. That's not true right? about algorithm updates Or whatever It is and using AI To create so much of that content? Just blasting out there because Of the way they're structuring. it has bullet points and clear headings and structured data. It shows up in search and then the large language models think that it's legit information. And I'm seeing a lot of these like just paraphrased AI generated slop sites appearing an AI search, so when you ask a large-language model about SEO or GEO or whatever... ...it is going to give you information which sometimes isn't based on reality.

[00:13:30] To add to this we have things such as ChatGPT's new model launch But ChatGPT-FivePoint Three, which is what the vast majority of chat GPT users are using I think ninety five percent or more. It doesn't do as like robust research in the background. it doesn't Do As Many Fanout Queries? Um...It Doesn't Use As Many Techniques To Like Filter. You Know Really Good Data Because Its Just Trying to Respond Really Quickly. So you're Getting A Lot Of That Bad Information Kind Of Circulating In AI Answers. so i Think its This Really bad vicious cycle of people getting bad information, using AI tools to circulate that bad information. And it's definitely I would say a bigger problem or bigger challenge than we've ever had before.

[00:14:14] and what do you think? how? We could break this cycle. so is it up too? open AI for example two improve their method methodology in the background for the grounding process. Or i mean we could obviously ask People To Please Stop Produce AI Slop Content. But as always, probably if people see a loophole at least some people try to exploit it. As much as possible through their own personal gains. So what do you think? Like how will the whole How would this whole cycle look like in six weeks three months Six months? I mean i think It has To come from The companies like Google and open AI for Anybody to Do anything right. um google is? I apparently today just concluded a core update. Still

digging into the impact of that, i was expecting them to be a bit more aggressive with some of the slop.

[00:15:09] That's happening so far? I haven't seen huge indications that they're doing that. but um You know They do have systems in place that are working all The time to demote A lot Of ai slops. So at least on google side They already Have mechanisms whether or not their perfect. i think they're constantly improving Them. and you see it All the Time where like people launch scaled content, they use AI to programmatically create lots of content. And then within three to six months like clockwork you start to see it decline. and since large language models are using Google and Bing in other search providers You can also see a corresponding drop-in citations over time when that happens. Grockopedia is really good example.

[00:15:49] I think one up to millions in monthly traffic for a bit crashing pretty hard and we're not really seeing it cited in lmz there. so that's an extreme example. but i think you see the happen a lot. where needs to change more would say is i think open ai. In particular need to do better at fighting spam and elevating high quality URLs citations. I think they are trying figure this out right now. obviously its early days for them, You know, I've said this before but like Google didn't even have a spam web spam team for the first several years. And even then it took them really long time to figure things out. so you know i think It's kind of a wild west right now, you know? It's Kind Of Like A gold rush where its true that if you try a lot of spammy stuff might work You Know better than maybe will Work in a couple Years.

[00:16:40] But i Think i wouldn't bet on it working forever That's For sure. and how do you think about This somehow funny combination of OpenAI on the one hand having their fanart career methodology and obviously things that are changing with new model releases. So for example, I think also GPT-Five point three now a stronger tendency to use site search maybe an inherent brand bias in some ways. But then on the other hand, OMEI also relying on Google. So if Google for example pushes a core update than maybe Sam Altman wakes up to a lot of angry users that feel like their results off judgeability have gotten worse just based on a cascading effect over google core updates. so how do you look at this somehow interesting and confusing combination tools, but then also everybody's still relying on Google and Google having like strong knock-on effects of everything they're doing.

[00:17:48] Yeah I even had the thought recently i wonder if google is intentionally making its results worse because everyone's using google for their ai products. um that's one thought that i have recently. ,but um it's just a conspiracy. .But..I mean...the first thing to note is openai has never publicly admitted that they are using google right? All the public records indicate that they've only ever used being even though that relationship I think is over now. They have never once said yes we rely on Google like it's been like the SEO industry and some journalists in everything trying to like piece together probably coming from Google. We know that they've used SERP API in the past, we know that SERP APIs using Google... I guess Serp API had OpenAI as a client logo on their site and then took that down!

[00:18:38] And we knew that Google has sued SERP-API. so it's like..we kind of all connected to dots. i think there also been like probably twenty studies our industry at this point show likely leveraging Google really heavily but its interesting. That's always been strange to me. Like, do they have some partnership that we don't know about? Are they just using Google without Google's permission? it kind of feels like that might be happening. so I Don't know if Sam Altman is gonna go out there and talk about oh yeah all the citations in chat gpt you're going look different now because google had an update. um i also think There's a lot of indication that open ai Is trying to rely less on google over time You know, even though there's lots of studies like a peak AI recently did.

[00:19:19] A study that was like eighty three percent overlap with Google Shopping. but I think we're starting to see what these new model updates for example Like fewer Fanout queries and more like caching i think in chat to PT or at least like them kind Of using their own internal index. one thing? I've

seen With them is like if they discover a URL even if that URL becomes like no indexed or removed, or changed. They can still store it. so I think what they're trying to do is use search to discover URLs. but i think they are trying maintain a database of their own URLs as well just be less reliant on external providers. So this means basically in the process of building your own index? Is correct? That's what I think, and others have seen the same.

[00:20:08] It is again impossible to know what they are actually doing. but i've see a lot of URLs appearing in there that don't otherwise appear on top positions like Google or maybe they used do. But having an index as one thing knowing which URL our high quality Right and fighting spam is the hard part. So having a raw index of URLs that they've discovered, it's just step one. so I'll be curious to see what they do with. ultimately things like EET and you know domain authority in these concepts we have had for a long time. i don't think they quite figured out yet. Just as said ,I constantly have this deja vu moments when were talking about how does OpenAI figure out which URLs to serve, etc. How do they counter spam?

[00:21:04] It strongly feels like it's basically the exact same... Problems or the exact same challenges that Google had in the early days, right? And still people think about AI search and maybe partly right. Maybe partly wrong About this new magic tool That is like completely different has no connection to google whatsoever. Google Is basically some sometimes perceived as This is what your grandma Or your grandpa are using In The cool kids. I know you're using chachapity. How do You Think About This Whole? I feel like somehow polarized narrative in the industry, where there are not a lot of voices that have nuance. You were definitely one those but it feels as if they're strong opinions about SEO vs GEO etc.

[00:21:54] Well first question i would always encourage people to ask when they see having very strong opinion is Are they selling a product that benefits them if GEO is totally different than SEO? The answer's almost always yes. And, that's not to say there are differences right I think especially over time more and more things that're unique... ...and i've agreed with since day one where the problem was this positioning as something you know, only your grandpa cares about or Google's dead. Or all these things because it's like number one, Google is fueling all this stuff. You know? Number two... It's not dead. Google doing an incredible job of somehow maintaining its users probably by doing lots of things on Google that encourage people to click more, right?

[00:22:45] And search more. You know like adding a lot of internal links within AI Overviews that take you into new search and kind tricky things. but I look at the numbers every month Google's usage hasn't dropped so People are using LLMs as these tools But they're also continuing to use Google even now A lot of time. you might get information from ChatGPT That you go to google to cross reference or look at pictures videos. So yeah, the positioning is what I took issue with this whole time because it's dangerous. Right? And when I show up to my work at AMSEV and clients have read an article about SEO being dead and they want throw all their money into AI search. It's like whoa-whoa-whoo You know slow down. We need to talk about this because that's not exactly how things work and where i think The industry went wrong in the beginning Because I prefer being honest over taking advantage of clients.

[00:23:43] SEO has always mattered. It matters more than it ever has, but yes there's a lot of new considerations for AI search. There are lots of metrics and new reporting tools that people change their behavior. The two things are extremely important. now not one is the other isn't? What would you say from your point of view? Are the most substantial differences between SEO and GEO AEO AI Search? I think From so from like a. I've been saying this since day one But like the way that the consumer searches obviously is changing Like to search behavior is changing. The the way That you can ask

really long and detailed prompts, it's changing personalization in the responses and everything. That's all changing, you know?

[00:24:26] The lack of links now or there are much fewer citations than links in AI search answers. so like that...the whole nature of searching is changing. The thing I've struggled with since day one were tactics. what do they have changed? from an SEO on-site perspective? There's some new opportunities. You know, I think a lot of people are taking advantage of like kind of exploits in the system right now. A lot of People are seeing a lot Of success with listicles. a lot as people Are seeing success by putting their brand into position one and elistical comparing them against Their competitors. there is Like Brand versus alternative pages. you Know comparison pages? There's lots of these new Kind of pages that do work very Very well to influence AI search.

[00:25:08] whether or not That works for long time i don't Think it will but Right Now It's true definitely working better than ever. I also think, and this is something that i do believe in very strongly you know making sure your website says things about your brand and leadership. everything are clear. a lot of companies didn't necessarily have that. so like my conference talks shared the spreadsheet we can maybe link to notes or whatever Google sheet basically allows You know, you your brand to look at a bunch of different questions. To make sure that you're clearly answering that on your website. so when LLM's ask about your brand At least you can help control the narrative. and then The big answer to your question I think is what happens off-site?

[00:25:52] So obviously off site SEO has always mattered A whole lot. we've always cared About backlinks everything. um i think with AI search It's not necessarily just about back links. it's about how Your brand Is being mentioned in Different places And they Think That's Probably the hardest Thing to influence. Let's quickly dive into the whole like listicles, alternatives that part which stands for these initiatives or tactics. That might work short term also extremely well but it may not work long-term. because I think this is a very interesting thought and i would to know how you approach this, like what's your mental model for it? Because I could imagine the decline. So let's imagine i would be a client or probably I cannot afford your services.

[00:26:38] but um... Let's imagine it for a second and I will say hey okay Lily!I get it But why not take advantage of it as long as we can? so.. I mean ,i get your point. We should do all well And we should do long-term strategy thinking ..but still This and this and this competitor is now ahead us And this doesn't feel right to me, and it's hard for me to explain it through the sea level. How would you approach it? For sure! It is a really difficult conversation... I think there are ways of doing these types of approaches on very small scale and do them what i consider as being in the correct way. position yourself compared to competitors if you are mentioning competitors on your site or doing something that's considered an objective review of companies.

[00:27:37] If I were say who is the best SEO expert and then put Lily Ray as number one, impact AI search? Unfortunately, yes. So we are in that weird tricky world where like sometimes you have to do things I would consider to be slightly unethical. The reason why I'm so cautious about this is because of my history in the space and because of experience. And there's some other people like me who have dealt with many clients that've been impacted by algorithm updates over years, especially since it has become popular. To be honest i've already seen probably twenty or thirty sites lost a ton of traction that had a lot of these listicles. So I think right now, if you are going to do it, I would recommend doing on an extremely small scale because what I think will ultimately happen is they're gonna get better and better at demoting this as a tactic?

[00:28:47] Obviously Google doesn't want this so gamed in its search results And OpenAI does not either. We can assume one day soon there's gonna be this type approach. The question how far we'll

go? So when Google launched the helpful content update, and I talk about this all of time but it's a very important SEO history. It is not just the helpful contents. Panda or Penguin. are these really big updates? They hit so many sites that didn't even know they were doing too much SEO. They're just doing what they thought was best practices And working extremely well! close-up shop, they had to refinance their homes. They had to do all these extreme things because they lost everything.". So my position now is like. I never want a company put in that position ever again.

[00:29:38] so scaling these types of articles right now i would consider it very high risk. just Because It's Working Now doesn't mean it'll work In three months and also could really negatively impact your site. And I can share many examples about happening. And do you also see other tactics that basically fall into the same bucket, so potential short-term gain right now and potentially long term harm? I think it's tricky because The big wild card. That we don't really know the answer to right Now is is Google going to continue To behave the way that it used to behave when there wasn't? There was an AI overviews You Know? Um, I think now that things are going in this direction of like one true answer. I don't know if Google's as invested as it was before In like demoting a lot of this type of spam and the only reason i bring This up is because It seems Like they're acting much more slowly than They used to To get rid Of really spammy stuff.

[00:30:36] um so I just Don't Know like Where? This Is all Going in The Future. But Basically Yeah, I Think That I mean There Was A Verge Article That Came out past week where Google was quoted in articles specifically about the listicles and saying, you know we try to. We try not to have this type of content ranking in search right now. so I think like i would just be very cautious. um And I forgot The question You Just Asked Me. Want To Make Sure I Answered It? Other Tactics Um That You Feel Like A Potential Short-Term Game But Long Term Harm? Yes I Can Also Say What Comes To Mind For me Is AI Content? hugely scaled AI content where there's this term called mount.ai. basically it goes up, you have a lot of traffic maybe also leads and conversions And then It just folds down the cliff because Google somehow realizes that This content is all slopped.

[00:31:36] I'm just always asking myself Isn't There A Way That We Can Do AI Content Maybe Also With The Little Scalability In A Good Way Like in a Properly are valuable way and not having the slope and like the, the bulk spam. Yes that's a good question. um so yeah AI content scaled I think is extremely dangerous. every time i talk about this there's one hundred people telling me am wrong. it can be done. well What I see time and time again is the companies that go too hard into AI content, even if they think it's good. And that's always the part right where it's like. well we think It's really high quality.". The reality Is That They're Just Saying what's Already Been Said? I Think Thats' The Real Question You Have To Ask Yourself.

[00:32:22] As Does My Content Add Anything New to the Conversation & Anything Useful to the conversation? Um...I've Seen Time and Time Again. That does Not Work So i think Its Playing with Fire. I do think there are companies out there that have really good implementations. There's companies using AI automation to incorporate real data they access or customer insights, whatever. it is unique and can do well. I've seen so many examples where works for three months or six months then starts to degrade over time or crash quickly. So i just think its risky right now Um, and I'm very risk averse. And I do think that like listen, I do use AI for a lot of things to use AI For research or you say I for ideation right?

[00:33:10] There's a lot that you can do with AI. That's not Producing the actual content. i think that The content itself at the very least should have A human reviewing it and going through It and ideally putting in their own voice. I do think that search engines try to reward real authentic content written by humans. Even if right now there's a lot of examples of them happening, i think it is the direction they are always

trying to go. Let us type into how we approach AI Search a little bit deeper because one thing comes up when uh, that reach out to us. Um also clients at the beginning of a collaboration and also partners is how do you come up with? A meaningful set off prompts track into monitor because it's something where in good old SEO days an even still now a little bit.

[00:34:10] We had keyword data, we could go to Google ads on Keyword Planner and actually see search volume. Now obviously you already said it the way how people are searching is changing. but How do your approach that? Like how Do You come up with something where you're confident That It makes sense To monitor These types of prompts or these types Of searches? And like how do you Go about it? Yeah Yeah, it's becoming trickier than ever and we have less like real data available then ever. So there is a number of different sources that you can pull from to at least create the universe of potential prompts in topics and everything. so I think the first step is to generate as big of a universe possible with many data sources.

[00:34:59] So, you know we have different keyword research tools that already Have questions people are asking. You know like hrefs and samrush these tools? You can already filter by questions. There's people also ask. one of my teammates just made a really nice Like vibe-coded tool that were using to Basically categorize in cluster. People also asked questions for certain topics. there's Google search console data where you can filter queries of a certain length to try and get longer queries that are probably more conversational, more AI search oriented. Or questions that begin with who what when were why? That type thing. And also fan out queries right. so there's like the Gemini API in everything There is ways to gather actual fanout queries used by these LLMs.

[00:35:49] So I think it's first step is aggregate all those Also this paid-search data. Of course you want group them assign a value to these keywords as much as possible. You know, something's more like conversion oriented. or you're already driving sales through paid search with those topics so kind of prioritizing it. and then I think AI could be a good companion here. if you start to have kind of the core set of Topics that are very high converting at a very relevant business um...you can use AI some of the most relevant prompts and maybe like cross-reference that was existing keyword research volume data whenever possible. So it's not just shooting in the dark, but its actually data driven. But yeah there are a lot people coming up with creative approaches for this.

[00:36:35] I don't think theres one right answer. That would largely be process i'd follow. And how important is AI search monitoring data? In whatever shape or form either. uh brand visibility mentions share of voice citation citation right home. important is that already for you in um like guiding a strategy or also the be actionable. The work on the action items you take away from it. yeah i mean listen there's like a hundred things to say about prompt tracking tools that are, they're problematic. Right? They're not a hundred percent precise...they can't be. you know I think listen like we have personalization! We have free tiers and paid tiers-we have people getting all types of different responses from LLMs And That's A Feature Not A Bug.

[00:37:30] That's Like Literally How They Work Which Makes Tracking Prompts Fundamentally Difficult And Imprecise. You know, I think the best article about this was one that Rand Fishkin did a few months ago with Spark Toro where he kind of talked like every time you query an LLM your going to get different answer. So they're non-deterministic by design And I think that makes it really challenging. So as long as you understand all of that, and as long is are taking this data as directional data—and its not perfect data…. Listen! It's the best data we can get. Unfortunately... We don't have a search console from OpenAI or precise ways to know what people type into LLMs. You know, there's companies like similar web and everything that actually do have some I think access to real conversational data.

[00:38:18] So That's definitely a tool that i use in my toolset for AI search But you know To the best of

our ability using if you can A couple different tools to prompt to track prompts so at least you Can get a little bit of different data because Some of them have different methodologies For how they collect this data. It's the best that we can do. So yeah, when I'm doing AI search analysis for clients am i using you know peak and profound and Way K? And some rush AIO in these different tools an hrefs brand radar a lot as well. Yes! I'm using them because You Know...I think a lot of people are saying Well this data is not perfect so We Can't rely on it. like what else Are we gonna use at This point? An inquiry about someone that wants to work with you, for example now at Algorithmic.

[00:39:06] What are like the first things you look at? Like the first few checks or analysis You do? yeah It's a pretty extensive process. again as I mentioned before i'm not just gonna take on any client and very limited time. So I want to work With clients that feel really good About you know The partnership the philosophy of what they're doing and how they approach SEO. So number one, if a company comes to me and wants to scale as quickly as possible or wants to automate everything it wants to fire their SEO team just wants... It's not going. be good fit for me! There are all kinds of SEOs and GEOs out there that want that type of challenge. I just see how this ends but its' not the kind work i like do. If a company come to read my philosophy says exactly we wanted our marketing And they know that it takes a long time and I know that requires lot of hard work.

[00:39:54] Um, much more interested in working with them. I also like to work with companies that believe an EAT and this is something that...I've gone back-and forth about it because i do think Google cared alot more about EEAT probably around the pandemic. so between twenty eighteen and twenty twenty two I think google cared a lot more. I however, do think that it continues to be where they wanna go. And I think we're the LLMs are gonna want to go as well and have also seen work tremendously well in my own personal branding this kind of like EEAT approach that I've developed. so i wanna with companies believe in that. So answer your question...I had a very robust onboarding process With companies that worked not only understand business but understanding how we can position them from an EEAT perspective to set them up for long term success.

[00:40:50] And what would you say, From your experience? What are like the most impactful things usually that come up? Like is it content work as a technical SEO or work? Is it off-site? now maybe digital PR work? Is it information architecture? so Also, maybe if you say it's EAT what does look like in practice just for people that do not have such a practical view on translating the concept of EEAT really means into day-to-day work. What is this most impactful or has been most impactful also with your clients? The dream client for SEOs, even though it's a lot of hard work is like an enterprise client that has a lot technical challenges. You know I think with AMSEV last year we won best SEO team in the Enterprise category and also one Best SEO Campaign in the enterprise category search engine land And was all involving very technical project with MSN Microsoft.

[00:42:01] so That's the dream because when a company comes to you with very big technical challenge like a site migration or something and then you can get it to work, unless you're not doing tech SEO, right? You could burn the site down. But we have a really good TechSEO team. so like those types of projects go really well. So when a client comes to and they have technical SEO challenges then TechSEo is probably the priority need. make sure that the pages are being crawled in rendered indexing everything Properly, but I would say most of the time these days that's not the biggest challenge. That companies have you know some legacy companies that are on old CMS and things like this have tech SEO challenges.

[00:42:45] But i think right now content and off-site You know brand mentions or usually The biggest challenge. so it's case by case um...but as far As the EEAT approach that i'm using? The way that I see it And I've been saying This for years Um..I Think The experts that represent a company or work at the

company whether it's the c.e.o.. Whether its leadership team, like maybe influencers who are working in the company and representing the brand can do a lot of heavy lifting as far as branding marketing because i think People like to follow real people, real humans. You know you don't log on to LinkedIn to hear what a corporation has to say as an update-you logon there and see what experts are talking about?

[00:43:31] And I think that experts can represent brands. so i think the more that brands have real experts going out there providing really great content for example engaging in Reddit discussions without selling things but just adding value to conversation all of this ladders up success with the brand. And would you say that this whole, like basically there's similarity in your thinking about EEAT and how a company should approach it? Then at the same time. The fact that for example chat GPT but also AI search in general has these strong bias Towards platforms that surface real user discussions like as you mentioned reddit, but then also something That I noticed recently that LinkedIn posts. I used more and more so one more indexed by Google or surfaced more.

[00:44:29] And then something else i noticed That steve toth from notebook agency made me aware of Facebook groups that suddenly facebook groups are now being Indexed more and at the same time use a citation. So do you feel like it's just, that we're moving beyond corporate content? That has gone through five hands from SEO team to PR team to legal team so that is more authentic and human expert-led?". Yeah I think that reality of this situation search engines and now LLMs have been so spammed, so heavily whether or not a lot of SEO folks believe that what they're doing is spam. They see it as spam. I think that they've had to rely a lot more on the reddits in The Linkedins and Facebook groups because thats where real humans presumably are still having conversations And i think that Real Humans tend To Provide Answers In Many Cases That Have The First E & EEAT Which Is Experience.

[00:45:40] Google is very interested in firsthand experience because users like to read first-hand experience. So the irony of the Reddit situation right now, and I think that's happening with LinkedIn groups or LinkedIn & Facebook groups... ...is why those sites are so heavily cited are preferred by the Googles of The World is because they have this authentic human conversation that their users like to read, right? But now we have these new influx of marketers trying to influence conversations happening. I mean...the idea going into a Facebook group and selling something. it's so funny for me. There's nothing left where humans can just have conversations right? it's like discord or like these. what's up with his?

[00:46:25] private groups are the only place left even though marketers already trying to infiltrate whatsapp and probably discord but its like. The whole point is like these are supposed be sacred private spaces for human to have conversation without brands going in there installing something, And I think Reddit is trying its best to remove people from doing that. It's failing in many cases, you know? The technology so sophisticated now with AI and everything it's very easy-to-trick moderators but this really big challenge will continue be a cat and mouse game where these companies like Google and OpenAI are going try go where the real conversations happening. marketers kind of poison those conversation. Okay, it's a semi-optimistic outlook for the future.

[00:47:13] But yeah I would agree that definitely cat and mouse game. something i want to also get your opinion on is the whole organic versus ads part in AI search. so ChatchBT has introduced ads, obviously very limited scale. As far as I know. yet then Google is obviously actively working on monetization in AI overviews and AI search. i feel like the cool part of AI Search was that it was purely organic basically up until this point now. so how do you see um The future for it? because if we look at the classic ten blue links from like two, three years ago. We had over time an increasing presence of

Google ads where also a lot of SEOs got frustrated overtime that especially money keywords very commercial searches there was a big chunk of traffic that was basically taken away by the ad.

[00:48:16] so how do you see the future for that in the AI search interfaces? Yeah I think it's probably the biggest challenge that these companies are grappling with right now, obviously. They need to make money. they needed continue to make a lot of money and the way they generally make money is through ads especially Google. so I think That's one part of the conversation you know with a i overviews and with ai mode and gemini. The name of the game like u said is that it's so frictionless because there are no ads or this very few ads right now. of course they started to roll out adds but pretty limited still, and their certainly not disruptive. yet haven't rolled out ads in away. where I would consider right now the current search results pages extraordinarily disruptive.

[00:49:04] its never been more disruptive. if people like me accidentally click on ads thats when you know what they've. design the search results in a way to try and trick people into clicking on ads. To me, that's extremely disruptive and deceptive and highly annoying. but it is interesting for Google landing this place where sponsored results have never been bigger. they take up half of page. presumably we will move towards AI mode. right now there are very few ads. certainly does not disrupt experience. How are they going to make as much revenue, as their making with the current search results? With something like AI mode where there's almost no ads. It's at the bottom of a page... how're you gonna manage that?

[00:49:46] so I think it'll be interesting. pay attention too! They probably have to land on some version of AI mode or Webguide whatever. is this mix organic result with Ads and AI features because they would lose all the Revenue if they switch to the current version of AIMode for all users. So keeping a close eye on that, with ChatGPT I mean...I thought it was not the best move for them! i understand why they had to do it but It-for me and for many others kind of called into question A bit of user experience. when you're trying this like You know personal conversation about your life or whatever it is people are using chat gpt for And then there's an ad For something at bottom. Its' Not great experience But..i understand Why They Had To Do Super Bowl ad or they're like, we'll never do this.

[00:50:36] You know? I think that was a smart move! i think there's probably better ways to monetize AI than what OpenAI is currently doing. Do you feel let's say cascade of events. So from chat GPT launching ads, so I don't know about the exact timeline right now but chat gpt launching adds. then Claude having this or anthropic having this great Superbowl ad. Then Claude launching new models with sonnet four point six opus four point Sixth and Claude lounging co-work than This whole department of defense deal topic. And then what was the reason? No, I think this was the last thing in the timeline. Basically do you feel like... This has basically created a perfect storm for Claude to have substantial growth in users they're currently seeing.

[00:51:35] so i checked some similar web data and just for the Web and desktop and mobile traffic, Claude AI obviously not counting The desktop app usage, the mobile app usage. It has I think three X over the last um Three months or from January to March. do you feel like this is something that? Basically it has been the inception moment for Claude. four also consumer users for like the general public so-to say From This rather professional background they were in before. yeah Yeah, I've seen the same. Or like a lot of LLM usage, I think is questionable in terms of how people are using it and the types of answers that they're getting. over time, especially with Chatcha BT. There's a lot of people sharing. I've seen a lot viral videos this week and things where People are like very concerned about the answers that they're getting you know.

[00:52:59] And i think one thing That have always really respected About Claude compared to The others is it feels Like there's A lot more guardrails in place To say what It can't and Can't do? really,

really new ways to improve your workflow. And I think they're kind of niching down into that and thing more people are finding use for the tools For That Purpose whereas trying To Be The AI That Does Everything Or Answers All The Questions ChatGPT keeps getting into trouble, right? Because they have all these lawsuits for psychosis and suicides. And it's like maybe this isn't the best way to use quote unquote AI or language models being your personal therapist but with large-language models and agents in everything so far as the co-works on the clause and coding and that sort of thing.

[00:53:56] So I think Anthropic was very smart to kind of niche down onto that And even open AI and everything are trying to invest a lot more into those products. But I think we'll see where things go, but personally, I think Claude has done a better job of managing a lot of these challenges and trying to have like the Bill of Rights in kind this mission for how to use AI more safely than its competitors? Yeah, i think they have this AI constitution or something with Constitution...I don't know one hundred percent But yeah, very interesting perspective. Wrapping up the conversation a little bit here we already talked about Google a lot and obviously Google is still maybe to the surprise of some GEO gurus have proclaimed GEO Gurus.

[00:54:49] it's still like super important for the whole space. I'd like to get your take on The different google interfaces because if were talking About Google right now twenty-twenty six We Have basically Classic Google search, so to say with or without AI overviews. We have AI mode and then we have Gemini. Maybe we also have discover like the google app. How do you see these different interfaces? Coming are not coming together over time into a more unified user experience? Yeah I think it's really fragmented right now and disjointed And it's a bit weird because i think Like It just feels like Google is doing So much on the AI front and it's not unified yet. So I think, yes i think its going to kind of consolidate over time probably something that is like one AI experience.

[00:55:39] That might be a mix of webguide in AI mode. Yeah! I think they will bring Discover into the equation because their trying to personalize AI alot more And discover already highly personalized. so we're gonna see what Glenn gave was always referring to as like Jarvis with Star Trek, right? It's this personalized computer that is kind of an assistant. you can talk about anything in your life. And I think that probably Discover will feed into. these are the articles and content pieces we'll be relevant for you day-to-day. Okay cool awesome! Um...I have a final question. I always ask this, and it brings interesting final thoughts to the table. So what didn't we talk about that should have talked? What did i miss as a host of this podcast?".

[00:56:38] The main thing is how rapidly things are changing in space. I think one thing that people get wrong is they think that they understand, whether it's GEO or AI search because they understand one version of it. And it changes literally every day. these models change all the time. The ways that these companies are updating their systems changes all the Time and i think That a lot Of People Are Trying To Position Themselves As Experts? And I Think The Best Thing You Can Do Right Now Is to Say We're All Still Learning. Everyone All Of Us Even The People That Work At Large Language Model Companies claim that they don't know how they work. So, Don't Claim That You Know A Hundred Percent How They Work Because You Don't.".

[00:57:22] I think a little bit of humility and a lot of exploration and honesty about this is moving target. it's changing every day And trying to focus on the things that...I always say This The Things That Search Engines Can't Take Away From You Right? If you are business thats putting out original research Original Ideas Thought Leadership Original Data. They're not going to take that away from you. That's something that you own, right? But if you are living on rented land where you have a piece of content that is ranking really well for a month or whatever like... ...that can be taken away at any given moment. so I think invest in the things that are yours that are proprietary.. ..that build good brand

and build reputation because over time we'll see those types of approaches that win long term.

[00:58:09] Thanks so much Lee has been super insightful conversation. Thanks so much for taking the time your busy schedule It's highly appreciated by me and also buy all listeners and viewers. We'll put All of the links that possible in the description below, so to you are linked in sub stack To the algorithmic page and also to that spreadsheet. We're completely forgot now what this is about but I remember spreadsheet description in my head. What's the best place for people to follow? Would you say, Is it LinkedIn or is It The Substack? Yeah. Like tell People Just Google My Name And Then Pick Whatever Platform They like to Follow People On. Nice. yeah There's Options. That'S An SEO Power Move. Just Google my name.

[00:59:00] Pick what comes up. So cool, Lily thanks so much for taking the time. all the best to you and all of the success For your new entrepreneurial journey And I'm much appreciated. Thank You so much. Thanks for having me right.