Why Intent Matters for SEO and AI

Using keywords in digital marketing seems very simple. You just take a phrase that people search for, and then incorporate that into your content – right? If a keyword has a lot of people searching for it, and there isn’t too much competition surrounding it, then that suggests it’s a good one to target. Couldn’t be easier!

Except smart keyword use is much more nuanced than that. Using keywords well, means understanding the type of person who searches for those specific terms, the reasons that they search for them, and what that can tell you about how you should be marketing to them.

One of the biggest ideas to understand here is “intent.” And in a more AI-focussed era for Google, this is now more important than ever before.

## What is Intent?

Intent essentially refers to the *reason* that someone is searching for something, and the action they intend to take next off the back of those results.

If someone searched for “how to build muscle,” then that suggests they are doing some research of their own and want to learn about muscle building. But if someone searches for “buy muscle book online,” then that suggests that they actually want to *buy* the book.

These two people will respond to different types of sales strategy. The first group won’t take kindly to a site that teases useful content and then requires them to buy a book. The second will be perfect for a sales page. The conversion rate is likely to be much higher for the latter group.

In many ways, the intent of a search can be more important than the search volume.

Note that sometimes intent can be a very subtle and nuanced matter. For instance, when you search for “fitness apps” you are likely doing research. When you search for “fitness app” you are probably looking for something to download!

## Intent and AI

The other reason that this has become increasingly important, is that Google is now more interested in understanding what users are looking for, rather than simply looking for search terms that match. In other words, Google wants users to talk to it rather than typing static search terms.

And at the same time, Google wants to be able to *answer* questions by trawling the web. Once again, this means understanding not only the words and their literal meanings, but the intent that the user has when searching for those phrases.

If you think more about intent with your articles, rather than just search terms, then not only can you potentially improve your conversion rates, but you’ll also be aligning your goals with Google’s – which can only be a good thing for your SEO.

**One Bonus Concept!**

Another point to consider? The type of person and your buyer persona. That is to say that when intent isn’t the primary concern, you should think about the type of person who searches for a particular keyphrase. Is this the type of person who fits your target demographic?