

# Rebuttal: Is SEO Dead? Not by a Long Shot

by Devin Butler

This article is in response to New Google Rules Make Keywords the Dinosaurs of the Internet by Joyce Sunila.

Recently, there have been many cries that search engine optimization (SEO) "is dead." These typically appear in the wake of a public statement from one of the major search engines following an algorithm shift, new service or "rule."

These alterations may change the game, but they certainly don't end it. Matt Cutts, head of the Web-spam Team at Google, recently said that SEO is marketing, and that "marketing appeals to human nature...and that's never going to go away."

As an SEO professional who has helped hundreds of plastic surgeons enhance their online visibility, I couldn't agree with Cutts more.

True SEO professionals understand that ranking for a particular keyword phrase such as [Los Angeles Plastic Surgeon is just part of the battle. There are many other factors to consider, including enticing someone to visit your site from the search engine results page; educating and attracting them with your experience, surgical skills and results; and, ultimately, getting prospective patients to schedule a consultation.

Google and other search engines have always counted website content among the key factors when creating the algorithms that produce their search results.



In the past, cramming your content full of keywords was an effective way to rank high on the search engines, but times have changed. That said, these engines need to understand the content on your site to appropriately display it in the results of a search query. Enter keywords. Without the use of keywords, search engines can't do their job, which is to rapidly and accurately determine what a page is about.

Yes, fresh content on your website counts, but additionally, existing material on your site must be up to date and accurate. The latter is what separates one plastic surgeon's website from that of another. You would be surprised at the number of U.S.-based plastic surgery websites that still say silicone breast implants are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. If a visitor to your website saw information that was so blatantly erroneous, do you think they would trust you? Not likely.

Joyce Sunila's recent article, New Google Rules Make Keywords the Dinosaurs of the Internet, was written after Google announced that they would be crawling and indexing recent information.

This change was enacted largely to serve the searcher looking for time-sensitive information. Search engines are smart. They understand that not all industries have or need constant news flows.

For example, if someone does a search query for [Presidential Election] they are probably looking for very current information, not a result that shows who ran in the 1960s. On the flip side, if someone was interested in the pros and cons of "subglandular breast implant placement," recency is not as essential. The pros and cons of this type of procedure are firmly established and change little from day to day or week to week. Google recognizes that new content for this and other evergreen topics is not essential, and therefore would not penalize a website that lacks such content. Cutts confirmed this at the recent SEO conference in Las Vegas.

Search engines are becoming much better at understanding the written word, including correct spellings and synonyms for commonly used terms. They are taking a multitude of other factors into account when deciding how a website should rank.

Links have always been important, but now local listings (e.g., Google Places or Bing Local), citations, social signals, and user behavior also matter. Google takes more than 250 factors into consideration when determining how a site ranks.

Sunila points to e-newsletters as a viable marketing vehicle. While these newsletters can be an

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adjunct to an effective strategy, they will never replace SEO. Considering the fact that Google makes more than 500 changes to its algorithm each year, SEO has never been more important. Now is not the time to jump ship and abandon SEO. Instead, it is the time to roll with the changes and hire a reputable SEO firm that understands the brave new world.

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