Should You Optimize Your Website for AI?

I was asked to respond to this video Neil Patel posted on LinkedIn:

If you've been following SEO lately, you've probably seen the wave of posts, videos, and hot takes about "AI Search." Neil Patel, Rand Fishkin, everyone's talking about it — how AI is changing the game, how Google's old rules no longer apply.

Here's the truth: **AI isn't killing SEO. It's evolving it.** If you understand how Google decides what to trust, you already understand how AI decides what to trust.

Let's unpack that.

1. SEO Is Still SEO

Optimizing for search is optimizing for AI.

Google's trust model — **E-E-A-T** (Experience, Expertise, Authority, and Trust) — is the same system AI leans on to decide what to quote, summarize, or cite. The signals that help you rank on Google are the signals AI uses to decide your site is worth referencing.

So, the fundamentals haven't changed. The lens has.

2. Content Still Wins: More Than Ever

AI systems need great content to pull from. That means the playing field is more level now — a single, high-quality page on a smaller site can get surfaced if it provides a better answer.

Using AI tools for writing is fine — just remember it's an *arrow in the quiver, not the whole quiver.* The real differentiator is **original thought**: experiments, data, and insight that only you can produce.

AI can help you clean it up or format it, but it can't invent what it's never seen. **Publish something AI would want to learn from.**

3. AI Likes Plain Language

AI doesn't prefer marketing fluff or clever metaphors — it wants clarity.

For your site to show up as a reference or answer source, write the way AI answers humans: short, clear sentences, real explanations, and content that directly answers questions.

A practical approach: use tools like **AnswerThePublic** or **AlsoAsked.com** to find real questions, then answer them with real experience. That's how you win both search and AI.

4. Focus on Buyer-Intent Content

Many sites are seeing less traffic because AI is answering the *research* questions ("what is…", "how do I…"). That's not bad news — it's just a shift.

Your best opportunities are now at the bottom of the funnel — the **buyer-intent questions** people (and AI) ask right before a purchase:

- Which one is better?
- Is there a warranty?
- How long does it last?
- What's included?

Build FAQ-style pages that answer those. You'll still earn search traffic, and you'll feed AI the clear, trustworthy answers it needs to mention you.

5. Keep Getting Reviews

Reviews are quickly becoming the new backlinks — a crowd-sourced trust signal. AI uses them to verify that your business is real, active, and liked.

If you're not already building a steady review pipeline, start now. Fresh reviews help both humans and algorithms decide you're worth trusting.

6. How Reporting is Changing

We're now seeing **Generative Engine traffic** (Google SGE, Bing Copilot, etc.) show up in analytics and SEO tools. Tracking how often your site is mentioned or linked in AI-generated results is the next step.

It's early, but worth including in your reporting and SEO strategy. It shows how visible your site is in this new ecosystem — not just in blue links, but in AI-summarized answers.

Final Thoughts

AI isn’t rewriting SEO — it’s exposing who was faking it. If your site already has clarity, credibility, and original value, you’re in great shape.

The best way to “optimize for AI” is the same way you’ve always optimized for humans: write clearly, prove you know your stuff, and keep showing up with useful information.

In short: SEO is still SEO. AI just raised the bar.

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