

# **GYCP Ep 121 - SEO is not Dead: How to Improve Your Website's SEO**

[INTRO MUSIC]

*This is the Grow My Clinic Podcast by Clinic Mastery where we help you deliver amazing client experiences to grow your clinic.*

**JACK:** Well, welcome back to another episode of the Grow Your Clinic Podcast. My name is Jack O'Brien and I am excited! It's so good to be back in the saddle and here for another episode, been mixing up with all sorts of different episodes. I've been traveling, it's all happening on the clinic mastery front, and today is no different. We have another guest joining us on the show and I am super excited to welcome Emily Connett from the New Castle Creative Co to today's episode. How are you, Emily?

**EMILY:** Good, Jack. Thanks for having me on.

**JACK:** It is our pleasure, absolutely. So let's jump straight in. We're going to get into the nuts and bolts of SEO and how clinics can improve their search ability, and websites, and help more people, get in front of more eyeballs. But before we do that, let's find out about Emily Connett.

So, a couple of quick rapid-fire questions for you, Emily. What are you working on right now?

**EMILY:** Right now, probably one of the biggest projects I've got going on is actually creating a course based around SEO, so being able to teach people how they can DIY their own websites' SEO.

**JACK:** Yeah, right. I like it. It's good fun, and we'll more touch more on that challenge towards the end of the show. So, next question for you: what are you learning right now? What are you reading?

**EMILY:** Uhm, I am about to start a book called [Chase the Lion](#), which was recommended to me, and it's about chasing big dreams or going after big things. So, I'm excited to get into that.

**JACK:** That's awesome! Is it like a person from a personal development space or a novel? Or?

**EMILY:** Uhm yeah, personal development.

**JACK:** Yeah, right. I like it. Who's the author? So we can track it down.

**EMILY:** Oh, look I cannot tell you. I just googled the book, Chase the Lion, and put it look mark on it there. So, yeah.

**JACK:** Love it, we'll link that up in the show notes for listeners will find it and link up the Amazon link if they want to check that out, which is really exciting. And who do you look to for inspiration or as a mentor?

**EMILY:** Well, there's a few in those space in terms of SEO and blogging. Probably, one of the big ones is Melissa Griffin. So she's basically built a business out of blogging and then turning her audience into buyers with creating courses and things like that. So she's really paved the way for that kind of thing. So that's really inspirational for me.

**JACK:** Yeah, right. I like it, very cool. So before we get into the nuts and bolts of SEO, let's learn a little bit more about you, and you know, for context, you and I have plenty of history. We've known each other for over a decade now, which is - which is super fun. But I loved it as clinic owners and the listeners of the Grow Your Clinic Podcast, we love learning from other industries and from experts. Often, we get so clouded in by the health space and we forget to look outside our own four walls. And I think that's where you bring a lot of expertise. So what's your back story? What have you studied? What are you - what have you been working on over the last few years to lead you to where you are now?

**EMILY:** Yeah, sure. So I studied communication at Uni back in the day, and probably, I think it was about four years ago in 2015, I actually started a blog. It was just for fun, it was just a hobby. And as I was doing that, I started getting traction and started gaining traffic from Google and things like that. And I didn't mean to, it was all really by accident. So I was like, "what's going on here? how did I do this?" And so that's basically where my SEO journey started, I guess. And my husband, Julian, and as you know, he's deep into a website development. So there was that connection there too. So yeah, I just basically started researching and immersing myself in the SEO and blogging and online world. And I just really wanted to find out if it's something that's reproducible. So is showing up in Google is it just like a lottery draw? or is that something is there a method to the madness? Is there something that you can reproduce and create ongoing traffic for yourself? So that's where I started four years ago. And now, I'm still blogging and I'm also working at Newcastle Creative Co in the SEO space as well.

**JACK:** Yeah, I love it. And your blog has been an evolution over time. It's changes to all different sorts of topics. But in the spirit of SEO, so we can give you a backlink, you better give us the URL. And what are some of the things over time that Dosia has covered?

**EMILY:** Yes, so the URL is [dossierblog.com](http://dossierblog.com). And it didn't start out as that, it started out as a travel blog when we were living nervous seas in Canada. All good things come to an end and we stopped traveling. So I was like, "I can't really keep going with the travel theme, but I still wanted to keep blogging." So currently now, it's more about plants and home stuff and DIY. It's basically just all the things that I enjoy really. And yeah being able to find the keywords and the niches that people are searching for, and gaining traffic through that. So yeah, that's what I do.

**JACK:** Fascinating! I know my wife is an avid reader and our home is filled with all sorts of fiddly figs and different plants it is uh - it's great. And just for some context, what sort of traffic are you seeing through this blog?

**EMILY:** Yes, so it's about 7,000 hits a week at the moment and probably half or more of that is organic, so through Google. And I also use Pinterest, you may or may not have heard that Pinterest is actually search engine more so than social media. So yeah, using Pinterest as well, and then also getting traffic ongoing so the people who become readers and then getting them coming back to your website as well.

**JACK:** Hmm fascinating. I love it. So if there's anyone interested in the homewares space, and DIY, dossier blog will be linked up in the in the show notes over at [clinicmastery.com/podcast](http://clinicmastery.com/podcast). So I guess, that's all that has led to now at New - New Castle Creative Co as in the SEO space, tell us in. Let's - let's bust a few myths while we're here on the podcast. Is SEO dead? I hear it all the time that it doesn't matter, doesn't work. So tell us categorically, is it dead?

**EMILY:** Absolutely not! I mean maybe the people, who are saying it's dead, just can't get their websites to rank. So maybe that's where it's coming from. I mean, no, it's absolutely not dead. Has it changed? Yes. So the methods that maybe you are doing maybe aren't relevant anymore. Algorithms constantly getting updated and there's new things you can do to get rankings. So the methods have changed, but I don't think SEO is dead, not at all.

**JACK:** Okay, thank you for answering that question. Let's go fundamentals, let's go 101 for a second. What is SEO what do the letters actually stand for?

**EMILY:** Yes, so Search Engine Optimization, and basically it just refers to any updates or tweaks or improvements that you can make to your website to - with the wanting to get it to show up in search engines. So normally, we talk about Google, but there's also being, there's Yahoo. But Google generally has the markets, so that's what we referred to most. And so it's things that you can do to your website to try and get it showing up in Google, when someone punches in a search, so that people can find your website.

**JACK:** Okay, so Google's not random?

**EMILY:** No, not at all.

**JACK:** And - and so they use this algorithm. What - with people are talking about this algorithm and it's changing and Google gives it funny names when it updates it, what is Google's algorithm? What does it mean?

**EMILY:** Yeah, it's basically the way that they rank websites or the way that they view one website is more important over the other. And probably more in current years, it's changed from just picking up how many times you use a certain word, or something like that, to be more about your website experience as a whole. So how someone experiences your website. Because I mean, Google is a business too. And they need to stay at the top of their game as well, right? So, they want to be showing the best websites to their customers, which is us who are searching. And so that means that apart for just having good information, you really need to have a good website in general. So the algorithm now is really holistic. It's looking at user experience, things like page speed, as well as what information you have there.

**JACK:** Okay, so what you're saying is: it's - it's not it used to be just about the content and the words on your page, and now, it's about all of the other metrics that contribute to a website. So they're some of the numbers that Google Analytics gives us, right? Bounce rates and time on page, etc., is that right?

**EMILY:** Yeah, absolutely. So back in the day, people would use techniques like keyword, stuffing. So how many keywords you can get on a page, or things like that, and that now that just looks really spammy and Google probably penalize you for doing that. And so, it's really more focus now, like I said, on just making a more holistic approach to SEO. Having your keywords in there organically and naturally, keywords are still super important. But yeah, all those other things as well. Basically anything you can do, that is an improvement to your website, is most likely going to help your SEO efforts too.

**JACK:** Okay, cool. I've got another myth to bust. But before we go there, what's uh - what's some of the worst SEO tactics that you've ever seen? I can think of a few. What have you seen that is just like just hopeless and horrible.

**EMILY:** Yep, probably up there is the keyword stuffing. I can't believe people still do it. And that's basically just - it's not even like a sentence. It's literally just a list of words that they want to rank for, shoved into your page, like that is just the worst. Probably something else would be spamming links. So having backlinks or other websites pointing to your site is really important as well. But people went a bit crazy with that a little while ago, and just try to get a whole bunch

of links or you know swap the link like else, I'll link to your website and you link to mine. But Google's a bit smarter than that now, and they can see through what you're doing. So everything has to be done really naturally and organically as well. It has to make sense to the user. So, yeah.

**JACK:** Yeah, that's good. And you know, you can smell keyword stuffing a mile away. I've heard of a website once that overlaid in the white space of their website, white words, white keywords. So you couldn't actually see it and read it but Google's robots picked it up. I know, right? I'm sure the robots are getting their revenge now. So the next myth that I wanna bust, it would be around ongoing SEO versus once off. Is it something that you can do once, sit and forget, and Google's robots are done?

**EMILY:** Yeah, that's a really good question. There is parts of SEO that is more once off, and those things are probably more to do with the setup of your website, things like making sure your website's crawlable or adding in schema markup or structured data, those things have once-off. You only have to do it once, and there on your website, and Google can see it, and that's great. But the thing about SEO is that it's ongoing, there's no like 100 percent complete. So the more you can do to your website, the better it becomes. And the thing is that you might be ranking one day, but a competitor could come along and have a more optimized website another day. And all of a sudden your website ranking drops. So it's really important to I think maintain and update your website. And along those lines Google actually sees any updates you do as, "yeah well, this website is fresh, it's being updated," compared to a website that maybe hasn't been updated for a year. They might think, "maybe their information is a bit stale, so I'm gonna bump up the web site that's been regularly updated." That's really important in Google's eyes too.

**JACK:** Yeah that's awesome thank you for sharing. You know, I think - I think about a website and its health, like I think about our clients or patients and their health. As health practitioners, we don't want to see people coming to us when they've got a catastrophe and a disaster and we fix it. And then they disappear for a little while and don't do any of their exercise, ongoing maintenance. And they keep coming back in this disaster state, get it fixed once off, and come back. We don't want that happening with our website, just like we want our patients to engage in wellness and care and healthful life. I would suggest that your website probably should take a similar level of ongoing care maintenance and wellness. Is that a fair comparison?

**EMILY:** Yeah, absolutely! That's actually a really good analogy, I might steal that one.

**JACK:** You can have that, that's fine.

**EMILY:** That's a freebie.

**JACK:** So you know, you could probably see the deliberate segue here: if a website requires ongoing care and maintenance and SEO upkeep, there's a place for the experts. But there's also some stuff that the average clinic owner who DIYs their website can DIY some SEO. So if you can share some insights, some secret sauce into how can clinic owners improve or implement some SEO changes themselves.

**EMILY:** Yeah, absolutely. Well on along the lines of updates, one of really good way to do that is by having a blog on your website. So if you can regularly add articles or information to your website. I'd like to say, once a week, a blog post once a week is a really good place to start. That's one simple thing that people can do. And you guys are the professionals, so you're the one who knows what you're writing about and what you're talking about. So you really are the best person to be blogging on your website. You might want to get a professional to do that, but you might not, and that's fine too. So if you can aim for one blog a week, and that's a really good sign - it's a good signal to Google that your website's been regularly updated. And I like to look at it as the more pages or blog posts that you can add to your website, each new page or post is actually like a doorway that someone can enter your site on. So that each new page has its own keyword, so its own topic of information that someone might be searching for. So each time you add a new blog post, it's a new opportunity for someone to find you.

**JACK:** Okay, I like it. If I can play devil's advocate, what are we blogging on? How do we know what to blog on? And and and what sort of should we use? Should we use really professional, you know, a high quality of writing, or can it be quite conversational?

**EMILY:** I really think conversational is the best way to go. I think a lot of the times, we get stuck in as soon as we've go to write something, language changes to become really formal. But if you think about reading something, the best way to read something is hearing the person's personality and how they speak through that. And that's how you can attract readers and engage them. And then the other part of your question was what do you blog about?

**JACK:** Yeah, that's right.

**EMILY:** Absolutely. So, there's heaps of ways you can research keywords or ideas. What do people ask you about? What are your customers constantly asking your staff? Maybe, you can check with your staff members or your admin team. What are people asking you? So you could blog about those things or you could, I think especially for local businesses, look about what you're doing. So if you have news or events or things that you're part of, especially in your local area, that's a really great cave for local SEO there - is writing about those things. So I think in a way blogging is like kind of thinking about things differently, because we go to go about our day to day lives just normally. But look at everything as in: is could this be a blog post? is it

interesting or important enough? or does it give value to someone? would they be interested in learning about it or reading it?

**JACK:** That's awesome. Thank you. I think that conversational point is really important because we're not writing. Here's the - here's the problem that I see, Em, with clinic owners and health professionals in general. They're so fearful of what their peers and colleagues are going to think. And so they write with their peers and colleagues in minds, you know, university educated health professionals. So they write with them in mind, or they write as if they're writing a journal article or some boring academic piece, which is not the case. So my advice for clinic owners would be: don't write for your peers, don't try and write a journal article, and don't try and write to please the robots at Google. Right? Write for humans. Is that all right?

**EMILY:** Absolutely, yeah! That's exactly right. Write for humans and write for your target audience. What are your customers want to know? And like you said, some of them might be writing as if they're writing for their peers. But something to think about is how do our customers speak? Do they know the scientific terms? Because they don't. They're not gonna be searching for them. So you might mention them, but you really need to think about just the common way that people speak and the way that they phrase things. And if you're using jargon, are they going to understand that? Or is there a better term or key phrase that you could use that's gonna reach more people?

**JACK:** Mmm, so good. The other point you mentioned was that FAQs. And so a really basic place for people to start would be to look at your FAQ page and turn each one of those questions into its own unique post. I would say, as an intermediate strategy, if you've covered your FAQ using blogs already, head around your clinic, put your listening ears on, and listen to the questions that your patients are asking you in the welcome room or the waiting room, in the consult room. And if the patients are asking them in person, you could answer them digitally. And if I can add a really advanced strategy, because we often help clinics with content marketing and they get to a point - they may be create 20 or 30 blogs and it's like, "what do we talk about now?" And so the way to do that is maybe, it's ask the blog topic in a different way. "If someone's asking should I have surgery?" as a question. Maybe you could blog about should I have injections or should I see a specialist. And so we're asking the same question in a different way. So that's a great way to blog.

And you touched on local SEO, what is - what is the local SEO and how does that differ from just normal SEO?

**EMILY:** Yes, so if you're a business or you have a website that services a local area or a specific geographic area that you work in, SEO is good but it doesn't help you. It doesn't help your business if you're reaching someone in America and they can't visit your clinic anyway, right?

Like, what's the point in that? So that's where local SEO comes in and it's basically a way of targeting your SEO towards a geographic location that you work in. And there's actually a bunch of ways that you can do that to make sure that your local SEO search rankings improve. Yeah, so we can talk about that.

**JACK:** Okay. Yeah. So, I think the distinction there is if you're an online business and you're selling widgets all around the world, that's fine. You can just do your generic SEO. If you're a bricks and mortar business that serves patients within a 5 or 10 kilometre radius, which newsflash 98% of health clinics are, there's the outliers like online consults. But if people are physically coming to your clinic, local SEO matters. So run us - run us through some some hacks that we can do ourselves.

**EMILY:** Yeah, great. So for local SEO, one of the big things I think you can optimize and maybe even say some quick good results with is the Google My Business. So your Google My Business account, you may have noticed when you do a local search in Google now, that the organic listings have actually been pushed down the page and what's at the top of the page is like a map pack and it lists maybe two or three businesses and that's what shows up first in the search results. And those business listings are actually linked to your Google My Business profile. So the way you get to the top of the local search, in that map pack or in the local listings there, is actually by optimizing your Google My Business account, which website optimization can be like more of a bigger long term thing. But I really think Google My Business is more of a smaller, maybe slightly easier way, to get some really good rankings really quickly.

**JACK:** Yeah, right. It's interesting. So, it's almost like a whole another website in itself or profile we need to be maintaining an ongoing optimize. Yeah?

**EMILY:** Yeah, absolutely!

**JACK:** And so, correct me if I'm wrong, but that's things like making sure your opening hours are listed and your street address is right. Do we have any control over the photos that Google show on our Google My Business page?

**EMILY:** Yeah, absolutely. So all of that information, you have control over. And visitors can also upload their photos from your location as well. So you get some user photos and some business photos as well. But the bulk of the information in Google My Business, you actually have control over. And it's really important to update and maintain, like most platforms, Google rewards those who regularly regularly update their platform. So they've actually got a post feature in the Google My Business tool. And this enables you to you can share a page or a post from your website. You can add an update or a promotion if you're having like a 10% off or some kind of special deal. You can put that in your profile there. If you're hosting an event, you

can add it in the post feature there as well. So not only it's a really good way to show Google that you're regularly updating your account, it's also a great way to reach your potential customers. As soon as they click on a profile right there, the Updates tab will show. And that's a huge incentive, if you've got something going on with your business that they can clearly and easily see that.

**JACK:** Yeah, right. Fascinating. It's one of those, I guess, it's worth considering like a social media profile, yeah. And since you're creating statuses and posts, I guess that's a really good one. If we were to just not shop the level of skill and talk about website backends at WordPress, Squarespace, Wix; what are meta descriptions? Or how can we perhaps, do a little bit more in and around Yoast - what is Yoast? And what are meta descriptions? How's that for a question?

**EMILY:** Yeah, sure so [Yoast](#) is an SEO plug-in on the WordPress platform which we mostly use WordPress because we've had really good results with it. It's really customized and the amount of things you can do with SEO in WordPress is huge. So Yoast is the SEO plugin in WordPress. And within that plugin, you can add in your meta descriptions. Now, meta descriptions you might may or may not notice, but they don't actually impact your rankings. But what they do do is it gives Google an option to choose your meta description to show on the search results. So when you do a Google search, it's got the page title in blue that you can click and under that, it will have a short description of that page. So that's where your meta description is. So Google doesn't always show the one that you write, but if they do then that's a plus. Because what you can do is you can entice people to click through by adding in a call-to-action and describing what's on the page there. So you definitely want to make sure that you filled in your meta descriptions in the backend of your website. So if you click through to your pages or your blog posts and you've got the Yoast plug-in, scroll down the bottom there and you'll see the Yoast section where you can add in the keyword and your meta description. I think maybe one common misconception with Yoast is that all you have to do is add it to your website and that's it. (Inaudible) But you actually have to use the tool, right? So it's there for you to help you with your SEO, but it only really helps if you use it. So just adding it on to the backend of your website isn't quite enough. Yeah, use the features in it.

**JACK:** Okay, good to know. That - that's awesome. Thank you. And it is a little bit overwhelming, I've often felt overwhelmed with with Yoast or even just SEO in general. There's so many maybe competing ideas or things to do. And so I know that you guys at Newcastle Creative Co have put together an SEO challenge. And I just love the concept of this because it means there's a focus period of time where we can get around some experts, maybe be a part of a community, and really put some intensive effort into our website. So do tell us a little bit about your SEO challenge.

**EMILY:** Yes, so we are hosting a 7-day SEO challenge which will be sent out over email. And basically, it'll be seven days of actionable SEO tips. So each day, we will give you a task and a reason why it's important and then, you can go to your website and implement that thing to see your website more optimized over the seven days. You don't need any technical knowledge or anything like that, it's gonna be super easy but also super helpful for your website too.

**JACK:** Okay, unreal. I love it and that seems really actionable off the back of this episode. So if we were interested in learning more about that challenge, where should we head?

**EMILY:** Yep! So go to [newcastlecreativeco.com.au/seo-challenge](https://newcastlecreativeco.com.au/seo-challenge), and you can signed up - sign up through there. You just have to put your email in and then you can join the challenge and we can all optimize our websites together.

**JACK:** Sounds like a real hoot. That's awesome. We'll make sure we link that up in the show notes over at [clanicmastery.com/podcast](https://clanicmastery.com/podcast), but yes, that is [newcastlecreativeco.com.au/seo-challenge](https://newcastlecreativeco.com.au/seo-challenge). And I love the Newcastle Creative Co. its web design, it's graphic design, it's social media, it's SEO, all the things. And so if people wanted to reach out, and perhaps get in touch with you directly or your team, what's the best, maybe email address, for them to do that?

**EMILY:** Yep, so you can email us at [hello@newcastlecreativeco.com](mailto:hello@newcastlecreativeco.com). Do you or just head to our [website](#) and contact us there.

**JACK:** Awesome, super stuff! And we might wrap it up. Dear listeners, thank you so much for tuning in. We really appreciate your attention. If you would love to let us know some feedback, head over to wherever you listened to this episode and leave us an honest review and rating, that might be [Spotify](#), or [Stitcher](#), or [iTunes](#), or you can get in touch with me personally [jack@clanicmastery.com](mailto:jack@clanicmastery.com). And all of the show notes will be at [clanicmastery.com/podcast](https://clanicmastery.com/podcast). Emily, thank you so much for joining us.

**EMILY:** Thanks for having me, Jack.

**JACK:** And listeners, we can't wait to bring you another episode again really soon. Bye for now.

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[OUTRO MUSIC]