Prologue 0:00
Watch yourself doing something on the internet, searching for something. And watch yourself consciously how you react to different websites. You're going to see, find out a lot of things that you can then apply to your website. So for example, try to accomplish a certain task, try to find a piece of information, try to find what's the which animal lays, lays eggs, and is still a mammal, for example. This is an interesting one, do a research check the different pages you find, and what yourself how you react in this research. This is going to give you a little bit of an insight and how your users might engage with your website is going to give you a lot of information about what you can do better. And you're going to develop a better eye for user experience blocks, and make your site a better experience.

Intro Music 0:58
Welcome to the SEO leverage podcast where we talk about search, marketing, conversion.

Gert Mellak 1:08
Hello, welcome. Gert Mellak here from SEO leverage. Welcome to SEOleverage.com. Today on episode number 11, on this podcast, I would like to talk about a topic that's extremely important to me. And we can see in the last Google updates. It's more and more important to Google as well. The topic is user experience on a website. So first of all, what do we refer to as user experience? It's really all the impressions we get when we come to a website, and essentially make a lot of decisions we're going to talk about later. So what is my experience when I navigate a website? How do I like it? Do I find obstacles and things like those? Now, wasn't it all about content? Content was king, everybody said and everybody still says and I do so as well. Content is king. So how does user experience play into this? The reason here why user experience is so important is really because user experience is going to decide whether someone gives your content a shot, whether someone is going to spend time on your website, whether someone is going to scroll down is going to open up an additional page etc. Imagine you come to a page it takes a long time to load. You click on a link, it takes a long time to load. How inclined are you going to be to click on another link to open it up? If it takes so long. And especially, imagine you're on a mobile phone, you're in a line at Starbucks. How much are you going to click around on this site, if it has a really, really poor site speed? How inclined would you be to navigate a website that has a design that looks like from 15 years ago. I think Craigslist is probably the only site out there that can afford to have such a design, everybody else should have an updated design, should have a nice looking website. We talked about this. I think in Episode 2 with Greg Merrilees from Studio1Design, where we said the design is really deciding whether someone is going to read and trust your content. So this is where design is just a big part of user experience. If you come to a website, your brain is going to make a lot of decisions in microseconds. And one of those decisions is going to be if you think this site is what you're looking for. Imagine you search for how to use, I don't know how to close all the apps on an iPhone at once. You search for these, you come to a website, and the website doesn't seem to give you the answer or they show you a lot of ads and opt in forms etc. At the beginning, you're probably hitting the back button and go to Google and click on another result. This going back to Google and clicking on the other result is something Google takes a note off.

It's something that's easy to track for users Google. If you're a Google and you say okay, I'm presenting them with one website. They click on it. But a few seconds later, they come back and click on another one. And then they never come back. If I were Google, I would say probably the second one was what they were looking for, and the first one isn't. If I get this information, this feedback at scale, hundreds and probably 1000s of times, I'm going to make a note of this and say probably the user experience on the first side isn't that good. Probably, there is something we need to do better here. Maybe we swapped those two results because the second one seems to be deserving the number one spot, much more than the current number one. User Experience presents signals to Google. People are going to engage with your website differently if the user experience is outstanding. If the design is updated, if they easily find what they're looking for, if they can easily navigate the menu. User experience in our ongoing SEO. ERICA consulting, is what we focus on right at the beginning, because we want to remove all the obstacles and start collecting better signals for Google soon. On core updates, like we had one in December, for example, or in May, Google seems to be applying what they have learned over the time about user experience to the algorithm. And we see more and more sites with a lack in user experience, go down and continuously lose traffic, especially on mobile phones. If your site heavily depends on mobile phones, your mobile experience needs to be outstanding. Part of the user experience is site speed. So we already talked about a site that always takes long to respond. People are not going to be dead inclined to consume more content to click on additional links, etc. to open up any, any tabs, etc. Your site needs to be as fast as it gets. On our ongoing consulting, we do speed tests every couple of weeks, to make sure that no plugin that gets installed. No add on that gets installed impacts site speed in a negative way. We want to have your server located as close to your target client, target user as possible. And you'll definitely want to optimize all your images. There are also sometimes themes that seem to be programmed faster, just based on how they engage with things like JavaScript, and CSS, your developer is going to know more about these things. But speed is definitely something that should be top of mind all the time, and you would want to run ongoing speed tests.

Common pitfalls for website user experience are definitely apart from speed. Its design and navigation. So imagine you have no idea about the subject, you have no idea about the industry, would you still be able to navigate through the menu items you have on your website and find what you might be looking for. A good example is me, for example, purchasing art supplies for my wife, who's an artist. How could I with very limited understanding about brushes and paint. How could I find my way around a website that sell still supplies. The navigation needs to be outstanding, they need to pick me up where I am. I might even be able to spend a little bit more because I really don't know what I'm doing there. I just want to make sure I make the right decision and the navigation and the content need to guide me there. At the same time, if the design looks outdated, it doesn't look like the company cares about their image, about how they come across online. What's going to happen is just that I'm going to leave the site and find another supplier or head over to Amazon and purchase there because they know this environment, they're matching best practices and that just like purchase, buying there. So one pitfall is definitely the navigation. Another pitfall is big images and, and ads right at the beginning of the page. So these days, even if it was trendy a few years ago to have like full width and full height images and even videos at the beginning of a page or on the homepage. This is not the

case anymore. People are getting annoyed, people are on their mobile phones. The dimensions might not even be optimized for mobile phones. And people really just based on my experience across different industries don't like to scroll down to find the content. They want to know immediately. Is this page going to help them? Is this page going to give them what they want. And if there is a chance to easily skim an article that goes through it. Check out the sub headlines, check out the bold words and get an idea what this article is about, it's even better. People are not going to read your article from the beginning to the end. So content structure is also a big part of user experience. Today, I would want to recommend an action step. Watch yourself doing something on the internet, searching for something and watch yourself consciously how you react to different websites. You're going to see find out a lot of things that you can then apply to your website. So for example, try to accomplish a certain task. Try to find a piece of information. Try to find what's the, which animal lays lays eggs, and is still a mammal, for example. This is an interesting one. Do a research check the different pages you find and watch yourself how you react in this research. This is going to give you a little bit of an insight and how your users might engage with your website is going to give you a lot of information about what you can do better and you're going to develop a better eye for user experience blogs and make your site a better experience. So what have we heard today, user experiences important, user experience must be outstanding, because then Google is going to pick up better signals. And they're going to rank your site higher over time, as they collect those signals. We have speed as one of the main user experience driving factors together with design and navigation.

And we also want to do some exercises in, in taking ourselves how we engage with content, and based on the content structure, what content do we like, what content don't we like? Or where do we had to the back button right away. And maybe think a little bit about why we are doing this. I would like to thank you very much for joining this episode today. This is Episode 11. You're going to find this on SEOLeverage.com/podcast, Episode 11. We always post a quick summary there. And if you want to have a closer, have someone have a closer look at your site, and give you some ideas on the user experience. Just send us an email to info@Seoleverage.com or head over to our website and click the email me button wherever you find it. I will be happy to be in touch with you. My team and I are going to give you a few insights of what is it you want to focus on. And definitely if you know someone who could benefit from this episode for them, the podcast or this episode specifically, I think user experience is probably one of the most underrated aspects in SEO these days. So whoever can focus on a better user experience on their website is going to see the benefits. I'm Gert Mellak, you're listening to SEOLeverage.com