

What is E-E-A-T?

& why it's even more important
in the age of AI-powered search



Sharp Ahead
B2B DIGITAL MARKETING

Why E-E-A-T Matters More in the Age of AI Search

When Google's E-E-A-T framework was first introduced, it was primarily viewed through the lens of traditional search rankings. Today, the search landscape is evolving rapidly.

Buyers are increasingly using AI-powered platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity and Microsoft Copilot to research suppliers, evaluate products and answer complex business questions. At the same time, traditional search engines are becoming increasingly AI-driven themselves. Google's AI Overviews now appear across a growing number of search results, transforming the way information is discovered, interpreted and presented to users.

As a result, the distinction between "search" and "AI search" is becoming less meaningful.

Whether a buyer is using Google, ChatGPT or another AI-powered platform, they are increasingly receiving answers, summaries, recommendations and insights generated from multiple sources rather than simply viewing a list of ranked web pages.

This means organisations now need to optimise for two closely connected audiences:

- Search engines
- AI systems

Fortunately, the qualities that help search engines trust your content are often the same qualities that help AI systems understand and reference your expertise.

Strong E-E-A-T signals can help increase the likelihood that your organisation is:

- Referenced in AI-generated answers
- Cited as a trusted source
- Associated with relevant industry topics
- Recommended during AI-assisted buying journeys
- Visible within Google's AI-powered search experiences

In many ways, E-E-A-T has evolved from being an SEO concept into a broader framework for digital authority, trust and AI discoverability.



Before there was E-E-A-T, there was E-A-T

E-A-T was the summation of Google's Search Quality Rater Guidelines which provides an eye-watering 168 page document to help "webmasters understand what Google looks for in a page."

Whilst Google stated that E-A-T is not a direct ranking factor, there are practical applications of these guidelines that are direct ranking factors.

Confused yet? Let's take a step back and look at what E-A-T stands for.

Expertise

Having a high level of knowledge or skill in a particular field or topic. This could be in the form of qualification or education. E.g. a WordPress web developer is more qualified to discuss setting up a new WordPress website than someone who has read a few blogs on the topic! There is also space for 'everyday expertise' such as a blogger who reviews restaurants, without necessarily having expert credentials.

Authority

This centres around your reputation in a given field. Are you a go-to source on a particular subject matter? Do you have strong reviews (third party as well as customer quotes)? Are you recommended by other experts in the fields? Do you have lots of content on the subject matter?

Trustworthiness

This focuses on legitimacy, transparency and accuracy and is particularly key for YMYL content where the wrong information could be very damaging if inaccurate. However, this is still highly relevant for all webmasters. For example: adding in authors for articles and blog content or citing and linking to external sources when referencing quotes, stats etc.

This seems pretty all-encompassing, so why the extra E?

E = Experience

This extra E stands for Experience which, granted, seems very similar to Expertise but there is quite a distinct difference.

E for Experience. Google defines this as content that can demonstrate "that it was produced with some degree of experience, such as with actual use of a product, having actually visited a place or communicating what a person experienced"

In short - Google wants to see that the content is written by individuals who have 'first-hand experience' of the topic.



Why optimise for **E-E-A-T**?

**Today, E-E-A-T is about
more than rankings.**

As AI-powered search becomes more prevalent, organisations that can clearly demonstrate experience, expertise, authority and trustworthiness are more likely to be surfaced, summarised and cited by AI systems.

In other words, E-E-A-T isn't simply an SEO framework anymore.

It's becoming a foundational framework for AI Search Optimisation.

How can B2B marketers create great E-E-A-T content?

Quite often the guidelines from Google are very B2C focused so we've compiled some tips to help B2B marketers elevate content to E-E-A-T standards:



E Experience

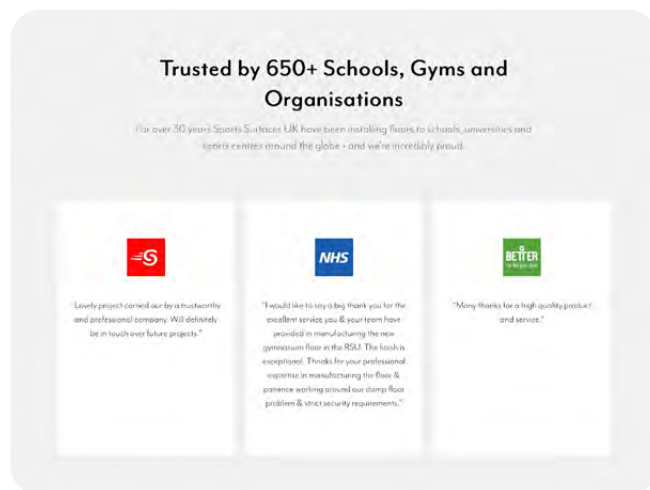
Mention your years of experience: e.g. Helping leading companies transform their XXX for the past 20 years

Link to Case Studies: Cite and link to examples of work with customers that highlight your expertise. Where possible, add links to case studies using anchor text that is relevant to the page you're linking to as this will provide other SEO benefits for your site

Embed "How to" or "Explanatory" videos:

Adding a video into your content that provides more information about the topic (or solution/service) can not only show your experience but also help keep visitors engaged with your content.

Top Tip: To help optimise your pages for search, make sure to add the keyword/phrase you want that page to rank for into the Title and Description of your video! Plus, if you use YouTube embed, this helps your overall video view count and therefore your VSEO – a win win!



Sports Surfaces UK integrate their years of experience into the homepage of their site, along with the number of customers they have worked with, and highlighting a few key customers, reinforcing their experience, showcasing authority, and building trust.

E Expertise

Select authors carefully: Assign articles and blogs to individuals within your organisation with higher levels of expertise in that subject matter

Create author bios: Create individual author pages which all blogs/articles to an author page which details more about their background and expertise in that field. Consider adding links in the bio to other sources highlighting their expertise (e.g. if they're a member of an independent body or even links to their LinkedIn profile)

Don't regurgitate: Showcase your expertise by adding your own opinion on the topic at hand. Ideally this should be backed up with evidence such as research, polls and/or citing credible third party sources

Structure your content based on search intent: Think about the audience of your content and the intent behind a search that might bring them to your content. Where relevant, create digestible sections that directly respond to this intent. This structure will also form the basis of your H2s, H3s and 'table of contents' at the top of longer form content – all fantastic ways to boost your rankings

Link to related content on your site: Internal links let Google know that you have more to say on the topic, or related topic. This also provides an improved UX, making it easier for the visitor to flow between highly relevant content on your site

Link to external sites: This signals to Google that you have researched the subject matter and are supporting your content by linking to trustworthy resources

Collaborate: The content doesn't always have to come from you! Consider bringing in other industry experts to work with you on a rounded piece of content

Optimise for AI Understanding

- Use clear and consistent terminology across your website
- Create comprehensive topic clusters around your areas of expertise
- Structure content using question-and-answer formats where appropriate
- Define industry concepts clearly
- Create dedicated expert author profiles
- Link related expertise content together

Why?

AI systems are increasingly evaluating relationships between concepts, entities and topics rather than relying solely on keywords.



A Authority

Build up related content: If you have 1 or 2 pages on a particular topic and your competitor has 20, then chances are, they'll rank more highly than you if one of their pages is similar to one of yours. To gain authority, you need to build a bank of content related to your field of expertise that are also shaped around your target keywords and phrases.

Integrate third-party verified reviews: Adding in third party trusted reviews from sources such as Trustpilot or Capterra, provides an immediate source of both authority and trustworthiness for visitors.

Cite key partnerships: If your work with other trusted organisations, then integrate this within your content. Adding external links for these organisations will also provide an SEO boost.

Build Authority Beyond Backlinks: Authority signals increasingly include:

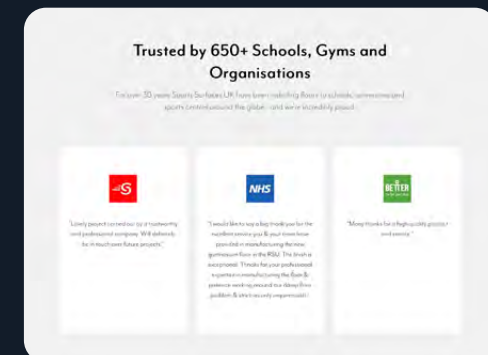
- Industry recognition
- Speaking engagements
- Podcast appearances
- Published research
- Expert commentary
- Industry awards
- Strategic partnerships
- Mentions across trusted websites

These signals help both search engines and AI systems understand your credibility within a specific domain.

But Backlinks are still important: The number of backlinks to a site is a key measure of your overall authority. Links that direct to pages deeper in your site (not just the homepage), gives that content even higher authority. Look at the top 1-3 websites ranking top for the keyword/phrase you want to rank for and identify the types of sites they are receiving links from to help inform your own backlink strategy.



Barbour ABI cites government and independent organisations which help builds both authority and trust with the visitor.



Sports Surfaces UK make all of their accreditations visible to show they are a certified and trusted provider of their products.



T Trustworthiness

Arguably the E-E-A portions work together to build trust amongst your visitors. However, we have pulled out a few additional tips to help bolster this further:

Check references: If citing third-party statistics, make sure these are accurate

Highlight awards won: What better way to show that you're a trusted organisation than highlighting that your products, solutions or services have been awarded an award in your field?

Keep content up-to-date: If you have 'evergreen' content on your site, then make sure it's updated to ensure accuracy

Top Tip: If updating a 'trends' blog that is relevant YoY, make those changes and then update the year on the blog and its related Title and Meta Description to include this

Show your contact details: In B2B, a phone number and email address displayed prominently in the header and footer as well as the Contact Page shows that you're a real company, with real people

Refresh your Google Business Profile: When users search for your brand, the content of your Google Business Profile may well be the first thing they see. Make sure this is up-to-date and making the most of the enhanced features it offers (e.g. products/services)

Trust Signals for AI Search

- Clearly identify authors and contributors
- Include publication and review dates
- Maintain accurate citations and references
- Keep content regularly updated
- Publish transparent company information
- Display credentials and certifications
- Include clear contact information

AI systems increasingly favour content that demonstrates transparency and accountability.



E-E-A-T helps beyond Search Optimisation!

We've talked here about E-E-A-T because of its relevance to search optimisation for both traditional search and AI search engines. But Google and Claude aren't your only stakeholders! It's worth remembering that almost all of the E-E-A-T factors are also relevant for engaging and converting your website visitors. For example, third party reviews will help prospective customers decide whether your product or service meets their needs, and including contact details on your page will help them to get in touch when they are ready for a conversation with sales. So both of those things will increase conversions from your website visitors.

In general, following the E-E-A-T guidelines will make your content more persuasive and more engaging for your human readership, as well as more attractive to search engines – with all of the marketing benefits that flow from that.

KEEP THIS TO HAND

Want to have these helpful tips at your fingertips?

We've curated the checklists above into a downloadable E-E-A-T checklist that you keep on file for whenever you've got new content to create.
We hope you find it useful!

If you'd like to continue the conversation or find out more about search optimisation and B2B content services we offer at Sharp Ahead, please do get in touch – we'd love to hear from you!

Speak to an expert

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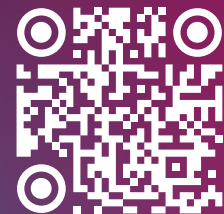
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