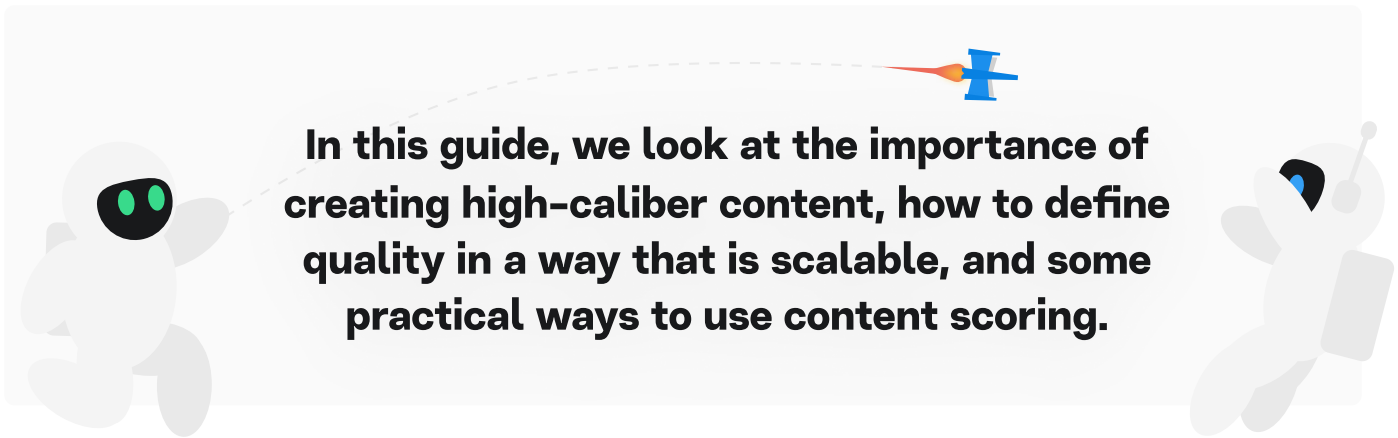# The Ultimate Guide to Content Quality

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In this guide, we look at the importance of creating high-caliber content, how to define quality in a way that is scalable, and some practical ways to use content scoring.

Why High-Quality Content is Important

As marketers find it increasingly difficult to stand out above the noise, and old school SEO hacks no longer work, content quality is coming to the forefront of the conversation. Creating quality content is essential to a good content strategy.

Executed properly, high-quality content is a critical business asset that continues to pay dividends long after it is published. Content shapes the customer journey. It builds brand awareness, drives leads and powers sales. It's safe to say the quality of your content reflects upon your business.

In today's crowded content environment, good content is not an option. It's a necessity. In the limited time spent scanning your content, visitors need to have the ultimate experience.

Anything less jeopardizes their chance of successfully navigating the customer journey. A lost sale is the ultimate price you pay for bad content.

Still, most people don't set out to create bad content. Perhaps they've been inclined to cut corners, some more so than others. But poor quality was never their aim.

So, why is there so much bad content clogging the proverbial internet airwaves? Part of the problem lies in how content marketers define content quality.

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Content Depth, Breadth, and Relevance

A common question that content marketing teams are faced with is what defines high-quality content? People in this position frequently struggle to write for search engines while simultaneously satisfying their readers.

Ultimately, content creation should align with the desired user experience. Yet even the most seasoned SEO expert struggles with preemptively defining and predicting which content will resonate most with their target audience.

A good strategy requires breadth of knowledge, depth of expertise, and relevance. Creating content of the highest quality means that every blog post and article needs to demonstrate that depth of understanding.

To be clear, when we talk about depth we don't mean content length. In-depth content addresses a host of terms closely related to a specific focus topic, which has nothing to do with the length of a content item.

The fewer words you can use to convey that information, the better. There are SEO benefits to clear and concise writing. It's information density and not content length that counts.

Still, content quality remains a qualitative measure, and that is going to be hard to scale - but, it's not impossible. Here's how we do it.

MarketMuse Optimize tool shows topic to add and
updates your content score in real time.

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Content Score

[Content scoring](#) is a way of taking a qualitative measure and turning into something quantitative. The most significant benefit of using a content scorecard is that we move away from a gut-driven approach to content. Instead, we're using a process driven by data.

Good content scoring isn't a vanity metric. Done right, it can be a good predictor of success in search engine rankings.

When you get right down it, search engines are in the business of providing the best quality and most relevant answers to every search query. It's the job of content creators to ensure their content meets that objective.

Most ranking systems only tell you where you are. For those creating SEO content, there's no shortage of tools do that. But a good content scoring system can help you get to where you want to go. Think of it as a roadmap to creating better content.

Checking for Content Quality

You can always conduct an audit of existing content to check for quality, but it's even better to bake it into the content creation process. Grammarly is a great grammar and spelling checker, while we're partial to the MarketMuse Suite to set a target content score and determine what related topics to cover to achieve that goal.

You can write directly in the MarketMuse Optimize editor to see how your changes affect the content score in real time. Taking it a step further, the Connect application provides external link suggestions from high quality sites that are non-competitive, helping to add additional value to readers.

For example, in this document we link to a site discussing SEO for NLP because it's a quality blog post and relevant to the topic of content quality. Yet it's not competitive to the main topic of this resource; content quality.

Practical Applications of Content Scoring

Content scoring is more than a theoretical exercise. There are numerous real-world situations where a good scoring method can pay great dividends. The ways to apply content scoring dramatically expand when you combine it with other metrics such as word count, page count, and ranking.

Here are just a few things you can accomplish:

- Isolating poor quality content (low content score)
- Detecting thin content (low content score and low page count)
- Uncovering fluff writing (low content score and high word count)
- Locating expert content (high content score and average word count)
- Identifying pages with keyword stuffing (low content score and high usage of focus topic)
- Discovering opportunities for optimization (average to low content score and decent ranking)
- Evaluating expansion opportunities (low content score, low word count and low ranking)
- Finding the best topics for additional coverage (high content score and low page count)

8 Things You Can Do with Content Scores

Read More

Once you start gathering these insights, you may find yourself with far more opportunities than resources. In this case, it makes sense to prioritize your options.

Basically, you're looking for a method of evaluating the urgency and overall likelihood of success in creating and optimizing content on a particular topic.

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How to Find and Fix Thin Content

The term "thin content" is vague term that can mean different things to different people. Content marketers and SEO practitioners frequently use the term to denote poor quality content. But their criteria for discovering potentially low-quality content is word count.

Here's the problem:

- Low word count doesn't equal poor quality
- A high word doesn't ensure a blog post is of superior quality

The assumption that low word count equates to poor quality may make you feel better, but it comes at a cost. Yes, it's easier to conduct a content audit of 100 low-word-count pages instead of auditing the full site.

However, you won't catch all the other inferior content residing on the rest of your site. Performing a spot check may catch some culprits, but you'll never know precisely how much deficient material you have.

Using content scores facilitates the identification of poor quality content and makes the process easily scalable. A blog post with a below-average content score is, well, below average. No arguments there. The only decision is how to fix it!

URL ⇕	PAGE AUTHORITY ⇕	AVG. DIFFICULTY ⇕	AVG. CONTENT SCORE ⇕	WORD COUNT ⇕	POTENTIAL TRAFFIC ⇕
https://blog.marketmuse.com/what-is-content-strategy/	41	65 Medium	4	2,520	2,228
https://blog.marketmuse.com/an-idiot-proof-guide-to-long-form-content/	35	61 Medium	5	2,543	293
https://blog.marketmuse.com/what-is-a-content-brief/	28	57 Medium	8	0	184
https://blog.marketmuse.com/what-is-user-intent/	28	59 Medium	5	2,505	123
https://blog.marketmuse.com/content-planning-tools-keep-your-content-marketing-on-track/	29	62 Medium	3	1,383	70
https://blog.marketmuse.com/glossary/latent-semantic-analysis-definition/	25	73 Hard	1	296	99

MarketMuse inventory shows your pages, filtered by key metrics to help you audit performance and quality.

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Here at MarketMuse, our content scoring is based on a topic model. The beauty of this method is that you can use your scoring process to inform your optimization efforts.

How you've scored your content is how you will fix it! Here's an example using this post you're reading.
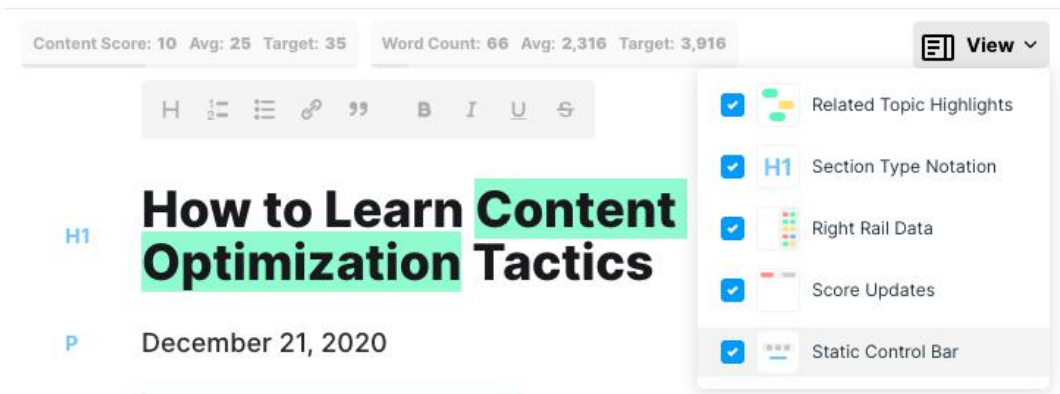
With a content score of 10, it falls far below the optimal score of 25. That's not surprising given that was only 66 words into a 3,000 word+ post.

A high word count with a low content score is another beast altogether. Blog posts like that are written poorly and stuffed with filler words and phrases that add absolutely no value. Most often you're better off starting from scratch rather than trying to edit your way out of this mess.

Sometimes you'll have a good content score for a particular topic but only one or two pages addressing the subject. This is an actual case of thin content where you don't have enough pages to fully discuss all the topics at hand.

The solution is simple. Add more blog posts to round out your content.

The amount of content produced on the web every second is absolutely insane. To stand out from the crowd, it's imperative you create the highest quality content possible.

The gut-driven approach to content creation doesn't work. It's slow, cumbersome and unreliable. Having an objective and scientific method to scoring content allows you to create quality content at scale.

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Take it to the Next Level

If you're trying to determine if your content strategy will move you closer to your desired results, you need to be able to predict with some level of certainty whether or not the content you create will move the needle.

Different content types are better for achieving different goals. For example, if you have a business goal of increasing conversions, improving your product page content could be one way to work toward that goal.

If you want to get more qualified traffic to your site, search-focused content that attracts users when they're searching for relevant information can do that.

After you've decided on your content strategy, predicting content success ultimately comes down to having the right data. Being able to pull relevant and accurate metric is a major asset when it comes time to justify investing in new content.

Predicting the success of a piece of content requires understanding the following:

- **Your existing authority**
- **The comprehensiveness of the content in a topic cluster**
- **The potential upside (leads generated, revenue, or value per visit)**

But how do you quantify things like "authority" and "comprehensiveness" so you can determine if a piece of content is worth creating?

With the power of AI, MarketMuse takes your existing pages and topic ideas and gives you meaingful insights that will help you predict the likelihood of success on those topics.
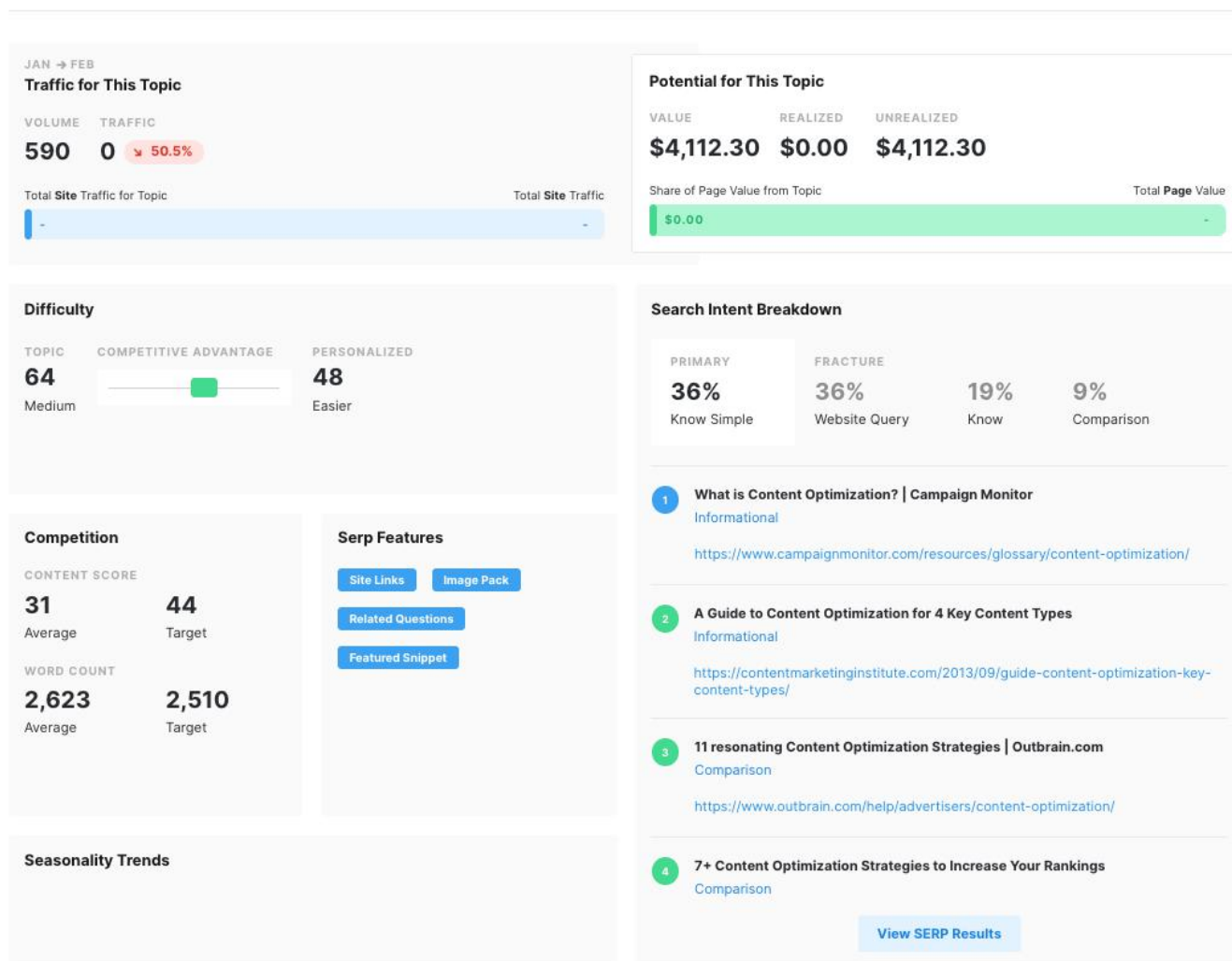
Let's take a look!

Predicting Content Success with MarketMuse Metrics

Modern SEO is less about mapping individual pages to keywords and more about understanding how well a page covers a topic and the breadth of coverage on the topic across your domain.

It's almost impossible to rank for competitive keywords and topics if you don't have a foundation of content that solidifies you as an authority on that topic. MarketMuse helps to clarify the competitive landscape, and where your content fits in it.
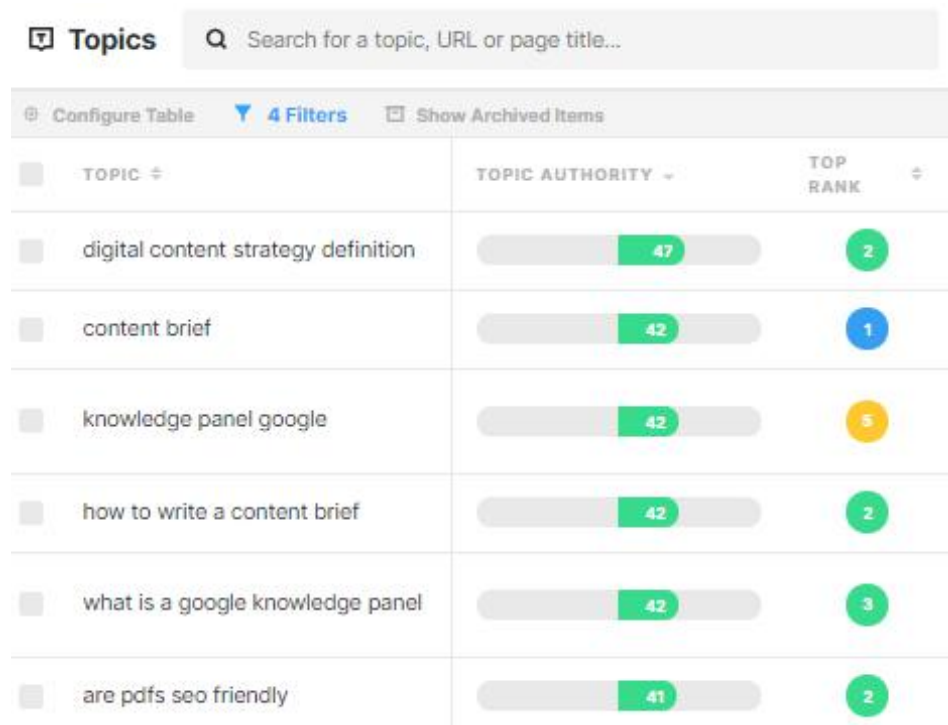
Topic Statistics

JAN → FEB
Traffic for This Topic

VOLUME   TRAFFIC
590   **0**   ↘ **50.5%**

Total **Site** Traffic for Topic   Total **Site** Traffic
| - | - |

Potential for This Topic

VALUE   REALIZED   UNREALIZED
$4,112.30 **$0.00**   **$4,112.30**

Share of Page Value from Topic   Total **Page** Value
| $0.00 | - |

Difficulty

TOPIC   COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE   PERSONALIZED
64   **48**
Medium   Easier

Search Intent Breakdown

PRIMARY   FRACTURE
36%   **36%**   **19%**   **9%**
Know Simple   Website Query   Know   Comparison

1   **What is Content Optimization? | Campaign Monitor**
Informational

https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/glossary/content-optimization/

2   **A Guide to Content Optimization for 4 Key Content Types**
Informational

https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2013/09/guide-content-optimization-key-content-types/

Competition

CONTENT SCORE
31   **44**
Average   Target

WORD COUNT
2,623   **2,510**
Average   Target

Serp Features

| Site Links | Image Pack |

| Related Questions |

| Featured Snippet |

3   **11 resonating Content Optimization Strategies | Outbrain.com**
Comparison

https://www.outbrain.com/help/advertisers/content-optimization/

Seasonality Trends

4   **7+ Content Optimization Strategies to Increase Your Rankings**
Comparison

| View SERP Results |

A look at topical statistics inside the MarketMuse Suite

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Authority

Your overall authority on a topic can be difficult to quantify manually. MarketMuse calculates Topic Authority for every topic in your content inventory using AI.

MarketMuse Topic Authority is a metric that takes:

- Breadth of coverage on the topic
- How comprehensively the content covers the topic
- The content's performance and ranking
- Competitors' relative performance on the same topic

MarketMuse Topics Inventory

This data makes it possible to predict the likelihood of success if you create and optimize clusters of content on that topic. The higher your Topic Authority score, the more likely your content will rank highly for your chosen topic.

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Personalized Difficulty

Keyword Difficulty is a common metric used to determine how difficult it would be for an average site to rank highly for a topic or keyword.

This can be helpful but not always granular enough to understand how difficult it will be for *your* site to get rankings and traffic. That's where [Personalized Difficulty](#) comes in.

Difficulty

PERSONALIZED	COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE	TOPIC
17		**43**
Easier		Medium
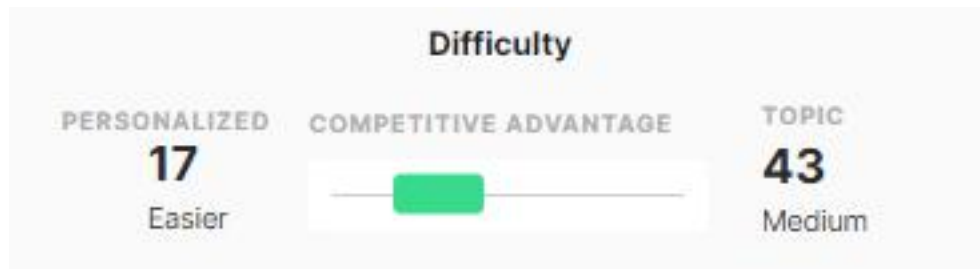
MarketMuse Difficulty, Competitive Advantage, and Personalized Difficulty

Like standard difficulty scores, a lower personalized difficulty score means lower difficulty for you to rank for a topic. What makes Personalized Difficulty different is that it considers how well your domain currently covers topics similar to the one you're looking to cover. In other words, it will be easier for you to rank well for a high difficulty topic if your site has already established itself as an authority on related topics.
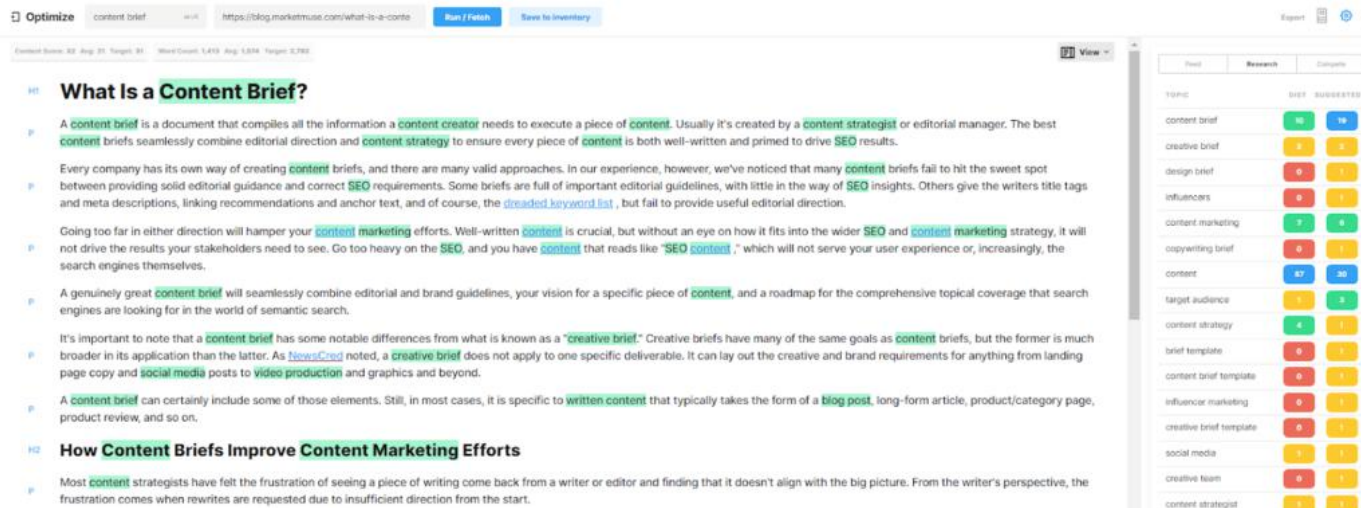
Personalized Difficulty also helps you predict content success by showing you the amount of content needed to be competitive on a topic.

Generally, a Personalized Difficulty score of less than 30 means that one good page will be enough to rank for a topic. As the score gets higher, you'll likely need more supporting content around that page to see the results you're looking for.

Content Score

MarketMuse Content Score is a proprietary measure of content comprehensiveness. The AI analyzes hundreds to thousands of pages on a topic to identify an ideal set of related terms a subject matter expert would include in comprehensive content for a particular subject matter.

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While Content Score isn't a ranking factor, it's a metric that allows you to quantify how well you've covered a topic based on the topic model.

MarketMuse Optimize

Ensuring all your content hits its Target Content Score can give you greater confidence that your content will rank more highly and provide a better experience for your readers.
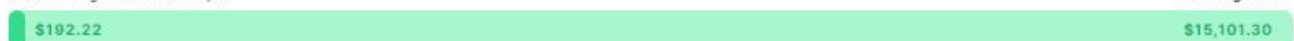
ROI Estimation

Improving your organic traffic is great, but ultimately, you want to know how that traffic is converting into revenue. MarketMuse allows you to add your own Value Per Visit data to determine how much value you'll get by improving your rankings on a topic.

This data can help you understand how much value a piece of content could drive. Starting with your high-value topics and pages can help content teams show value faster.

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Publish better every time.

Let us show you how MarketMuse helps thousands of content teams turn content into a growth channel.

Schedule a Demo