

Title: Frequently Asked Questions

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Second Subtitle: #0 Things Your Readers Should Never Have to Ask

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Summary: FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions - we've become accustomed to seeing them on every web site we visit. But, should we? If everyone is asking, why didn't we? Here's a look at answering and anticipating the questions your visitors ask.

FAQ sections are good signs your original content is bad.

There, I've said it. *Providing a FAQ section is not a good practice for any web site.* If you already have built a FAQ section, begin dismantling it. Look at the site with new eyes and find ways to rework it so the answers are where they should be. Covers that topic and near the beginning of the content. If you ask me a question, I'll give you a monologue about the theory behind the answer, you'll turn away before I get to **the point and answer my questions!**

Put yourself in your site visitors' shoes - you visit a site hoping to answer a task, only to find you get part of the answer or can't complete the task. Frustrated about this! Now you can visit yet another page on the site to find out where your answer. Armed with this new information, you are able to start over and do in the first place.

If this is happening on your site, take a step back and really understand your site. Don't think about your visitors, think about **your goals**. If you are able to help them meet their goals, they may just stick around and help you meet yours, or at least your message about your goals.

Think of **the web as a conversation**. An exchange of information, asking and answering, an actual dialog. Remember the 5 W's? They apply here, too. Everyone who visits has a question. **How do I ...? Where can I ...? What is ...? When is ...? Who ...?** Perhaps the answers will be on your site, perhaps it is a question that requires a conversation. Regardless of how the conversation proceeds, the visitor's question, the conversation needs to continue offline for a particular topic, say so, and provide the way to reach you.

How will you know what questions your visitors have? If you have compiled a list of questions, you are on the way to delivering the right stuff to your visitors. If you provide information, yet, be very conscious in gathering this information. There are many ways you will ask - if you have an online forum, a contact form, a place for people to send you emails - you are helping them help you tailor how you organize and present information to them. You can also learn from some indirect methods - search terms used on your site, terms used within your site, navigation patterns, landing and exit pages, and the particular page can help you identify the visitors' questions.

Certainly not every question will be answered or can be answered in a single place. There may be where the answers the same question may vary. The way to deal

contextual links to related content on the page is. ~~This is a common mistake you have~~
~~also be interested in.~~ on each page. Amazon has been very successful with
presenting other content. ~~Try to use~~ similar content. You'll be amazed at how effective
communication strategy is for presenting your message clearly and encouraging
your visitors.

Have some good reasons for including a FAQ section on your site? Post and
know!