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Should You *Refresh*, *Rewrite*, *Merge* or *Leave* Your SEO Content *Alone*?

1 Decide What the Article Actually Needs

I've built content update workflows using artifacts, Claude and Codex.

They help organize and speed up the work, but **a batch of 100 articles still contains 100 different editorial decisions.**

Each article has its own **intent, history and business purpose.**

Some need a few corrections.

Others need a different approach.

Some are already doing their job.

Before updating an article, YOU have to decide what needs to change and why 😀

Why Updating Blog Pages Matters

Freshness matters when the query needs it

Prioritize **relevant, current information** for SEO and Google's AI search, where the same SEO foundations apply.

SOURCE **Google: Freshness Systems · AI Search Guidance**

Leave strong performers alone

Google advises **avoiding radical changes** to pages already performing well.

SOURCE **Google Search Central**

106%

More monthly organic views

HubSpot's average increase for posts it **optimized and republished.**

SOURCE **HubSpot**

Start With the Individual Page

A traffic dip deserves investigation before it becomes a rewrite assignment. I always check for **changes in demand, seasonality and technical issues** alongside content quality.

CHECK	WHAT TO UNDERSTAND
Reader intent	Does the article still answer the question people arrive with?
Accuracy and positioning	Does it reflect current facts, products, offers and company messaging?
Business contribution	Does it support relevant visits, leads, sales conversations or customer education?
Existing value	Which insights, backlinks and useful sections should be preserved?

1. Refresh: The Foundation Still Works

I choose a refresh when the article's **purpose and structure remain useful**, but specific parts need attention. A small traffic decline may prompt a review; **the edits should address an identifiable issue.**

Facts and statistics
Replace outdated figures and verify supporting sources.

Products and offers
Update features, pricing, availability or service details.

Positioning
Adjust messaging where the underlying reader need remains the same.

Examples and visuals
Replace dated screenshots or add clearer demonstrations.

2. Rewrite: The Topic Still Matters, but the Article Needs Rebuilding

A rewrite may fit when the article covers a valuable topic but relies on **outdated ideas, positioning or an approach that no longer serves readers.** I believe age alone doesn't justify it 🙂

Intent has shifted
Readers now need a substantially different answer.

The approach is obsolete
Changes in the industry undermine the article's central advice.

The structure no longer works
Updating isolated sections would leave a confusing whole.

Business relevance remains
The topic still supports customer decisions, pipeline or strategic priorities.

2 Preserve What Works

3. Merge: One Page Would Serve the Reader Better

Consider merging when articles address **substantially the same intent** and their useful material would form a stronger, coherent resource.

Two pages appearing in search or AI answers isn't, by itself, a reason to combine them, so **there are other signals I look at.**

SIGNAL	WHAT TO ASSESS
Overlapping coverage	Do both pages answer essentially the same question?
Complementary material	Would combining their strongest sections create a more complete answer?
Conflicting claims	Would one maintained resource resolve unnecessary duplication and inconsistency?
Competing pages	Is overlap causing the wrong page to surface or weakening the intended reader journey?
Valuable backlinks	Which page has relevant links, and can the combined resource preserve what earned them?

Remember to ALWAYS plan the destination URL, preserve useful evidence and update internal links.

Leave It Alone: The Article Is Doing Its Job

Keep monitoring an article when it remains **accurate, useful and aligned with its purpose.** Keep in mind that low traffic alone doesn't make a page unsuccessful 😉 so, leave it alone if:

It supports business goals
Relevant visitors become leads or take useful next steps.

It serves a narrow audience
Modest traffic reaches people with a specific, valuable need.

It earns relevant backlinks
Its research, explanation or examples remain worth referencing.

It helps beyond search
Sales, support or customers regularly use it.

It remains distinctive
Its original evidence or perspective still holds up.

There's no clear problem
Proposed changes would mostly be cosmetic.

When the Better Answer Is a New Article

A piece from 2020 may document a useful perspective on an industry before AI changed it. **Rewriting it as a current guide could erase the history that makes it valuable.**

2020 article

Keep the original clearly dated and add context where readers could mistake historical advice for current guidance!

New article

If the new topic serves a different intent, then **I'd publish a new article and connect the two.**

Which Decision Fits Your Article?

CHECK	WHAT YOU FOUND	YOUR DECISION
☐	The article still works, but **specific facts, examples or messaging** need updating.	Refresh
☐	The topic still matters, but **the approach and structure** need rebuilding.	Rewrite
☐	Pages serve **the same intent**, and combining their strongest material would help readers.	Merge
☐	The article remains **accurate, useful and supports its goals** without a clear problem to fix.	Leave It Alone

Give Every Article *Its Own Decision*

I use workflows to speed up the work, but **I still decide what each article needs.** Sometimes that's a full rewrite. Sometimes the best decision is to let it keep doing its job 🙂

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