

# Be Careful When You Duplicate Content on Your Dental Blog

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*1058 times*



On its surface, duplicate content seems to be a straightforward issue. If you copy the content from Colgate's dental crown page to your blog, then you have duplicated Colgate's content.

You've probably heard that duplication incurs a Google penalty, so you create your own dental crown blog instead. Or, maybe you purchase content. Either way, it should be yours, and the problem is solved.

Or is it? Sadly, duplicate content is not nearly that simple. Let's clear up some of the most common myths, misconceptions, and misunderstandings about duplicate content and dental search engine optimization (SEO).

## **What Is Duplicate Content?**

It is exactly what it sounds like—content that exists twice (or more) on the internet. Contrary to popular belief, Google does not have a duplicate content penalty. However, Google does want each search result to offer unique value to the user. If it finds the same content on multiple pages, only one of those pages will appear in its search results. Therefore, you might not technically be penalized for duplication, but you will not get any SEO benefit from that page.

## **Reusing Content: Duplication Vs. Copyright Infringement**

The laws and traditions of protecting the originators of creative works are well known. As soon as a person creates a text, work of art, musical composition, or something similar, it is automatically copyrighted. Reproducing that work without the explicit permission of the copyright holder is a violation of law. It is also a violation of terms of service (TOS) for YouTube and most other content distribution platforms.

If your content is in violation of copyright law, you have many reasons to be concerned. However, your Google search ranking is not among them. Duplicate content, in the context of SEO, is an entirely different issue from copyright law.

You could copy an entire book chapter verbatim to your website, which would be a clear copyright violation, yet Google would see it as original content as long as it isn't on the internet anywhere else. Since most dentists aren't in the habit of willful plagiarism, that scenario isn't likely. What is much more likely is the reverse. Even when you have the legal right to use a text, Google will consider it duplicate content. A few common examples include:

- You purchase the right to use syndicated content, and so do many other dentists. The same article appears on dozens of websites.
- You copy text from the “about us” page on your website and paste it into the “business description” field for your Facebook page and other online profiles. This text is duplicated repeatedly across the internet.
- When you purchased a new dental laser, the manufacturer provided patient information and encouraged you to use its text and images in all your marketing. The very same content and permissions were given to every other dentist who purchased the device.

### **Creating Content: How Accidental Duplication Happens**

What if you or a staff member wrote the blog post? Surely it is original content, right? Not necessarily. There are three common ways that this original content can be duplicated in Google's world:

- Content scraping: This is the best known and least common duplication problem. Here's the scenario. You write an all-original blog post. Someone comes along and steals it, using a bot or simple copy-and-paste. Suddenly, their site ranks and yours doesn't. Although content theft still happens, Google has gotten much better at identifying the original source. Today, it is possible but not likely for this situation to seriously hurt your ranking.
- Using excerpts: Duplication isn't all or nothing. Maybe you used a common quote, included a properly attributed book excerpt, or borrowed a few sentences from a public information source. You could have simply used some common wordings or phrases without even realizing they are on the internet in many other places. Google will read this as a percentage of the article being duplicate. For example, a blog post that only had 65% original content is likely less valuable than one that is 100% original.
- Reusing content: Maybe you revamp an old blog post, rewriting half of it and posting it as new. Perhaps you have a few paragraphs of standard aftercare instructions that you paste into articles about several different procedures. Even if it is all on your own website, the same content on two or more pages is duplication.
- Technical reasons: Menu structures, categorization, and variations in URL formatting can result in Google seeing your entire page in duplicate, triplicate, or more. For example, a blog post about dental crowns might go in the restorative and cosmetic categories of pages on your site, with two different URLs, such as [www.example.com/restorative/crowns](http://www.example.com/restorative/crowns) and [www.example.com/cosmetic/crowns](http://www.example.com/cosmetic/crowns). To Google, one of these pages is a duplicate.

### **What You Can Do**

As you can see, it is easier than you might expect to unwittingly have duplicate content on your website or blog. Thankfully, it is also easy to avoid with a few precautions.

First, use original content. As tempting as it is to publish ready-to-go, copyright-free content, don't do it. If you don't have time to write blog posts, have your team help or hire a writer or content marketing service.

Next, check your content. Even if you think your post is unique, all-original content, check for accidental duplication. Programs and services such as Copyscape or Grammarly will tell you if matching content is found online.

Finally, use a canonical tag. If you want to have a duplicate page, that's okay. Just make sure Google knows which one is original. The canonical tag is a simple HTML tag that does just that. The duplicate won't likely

appear in search results, but its SEO benefits will go to the original page. To do this, make sure your webmaster is using canonical tags for URL variations and page duplications.

## **Conclusion**

Don't assume Google will consider your content original just because you own the rights to it or because you created it. To get the maximum benefit from your dental blog, make sure Google sees that you have something unique to say!

**Mr. Arulrajah**, president and CEO of [Ekwa Marketing](#), has been a leader in medical marketing for more than a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dentists, with a team of more than 180 full-time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call (855) 598-3320 for a free strategy session with him.

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