Beyond the Build:
Succeed with SEO in Higher Ed

Presented by:

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Principal SEO
Yoast
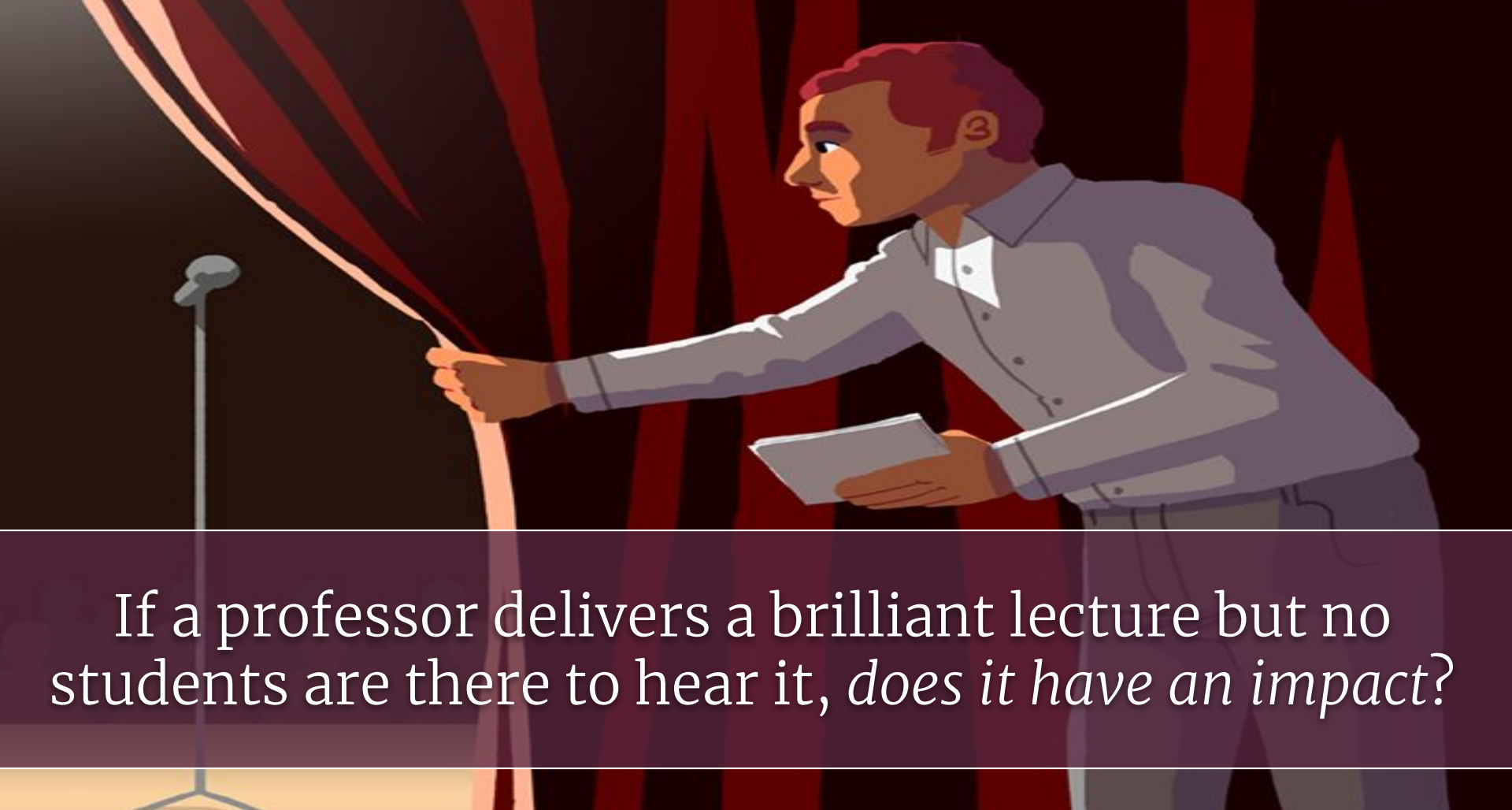
If a professor delivers a brilliant lecture but no students are there to hear it, *does it have an impact?*

Do .EDUs even need organic SEO?

- **Student recruitment:** visibility to prospective students
- **Academic program promotion:** highlight specific programs
- **Information dissemination:** provide accurate information
- **Enhance reputation:** showcase achievements and research
- **Alumni engagement:** maintain/nurture relationships

Do .EDUs even need organic SEO?

- **Local SEO:** attract local students
- **Event promotion:** promote campus events
- **International outreach:** attract international students
- **Competitive edge:** stay ahead of competitors
- **Online programs and courses:** promote online education

Do .EDUs even need organic SEO?

- **Organic SEO** reduces reliance on paid marketing channels.

- **Organic SEO** ensures "your side of the story" makes it into the AI knowledgebase

Advanced SEO *on WordPress*

WordPress' SEO advantages

SEO-Friendly Structure

- *Clean Code*

- *SEO-Optimized Permalinks*

Easy Content Creation and Management

- *User-Friendly Interface*

- *Content Organization*

Extensive Plugin Ecosystem

- *SEO Plugins*

- *Performance Optimization Plugins*

WordPress' SEO advantages

Responsive Design

- *Mobile Optimization (remember mobile first!)*

Built-in SEO Features

- *Automatic Sitemap Generation and RSS Feeds*

Strong Community Support

- *Regular Updates and Improvements*

Technical SEO and Schema

Social Media Integration

Choosing the right tools

Essential WordPress plugins for SEO

- Yoast SEO
- Performance optimization plugin like Jetpack or WP Rocket
- Broken Link Checker
- Internal Link Juicer
- Simple History

Essential non-WP tools for SEO

- SEOquake (Chrome extension)
- Google PageSpeed Insights (Chrome extension)
- Google Analytics & Google Search Console
- Bing Webmaster Tools
- Screaming Frog or SiteBulb
- SEMRUSH or Ahrefs

Technical SEO Best Practices

Site structure and navigation

- menus and navigation must be crawlable
- intuitive and logical
- include self-referential links

Mobile optimization and responsive design

Page speed and performance

You'll want to...

- Ensure FAST load times

- Serve static assets from a CDN with an efficient cache policy

- Eliminate content layout shift (images/ads)

- Reduce third party scripts

Choose a lightweight theme, and ditch unnecessary bells and whistles.

"Don't overbling your blog."

Quick technical checklist

- **Make sure your site is visible to search engines**
- Verify robots.txt is correct
- Verify sitemap.xml is functioning correctly
- Configure/turn on/optimize permalinks
- Set up default title and meta descriptions
- *(Maybe)* Set WordPress plugins and themes to auto-update
- Organize content with categories and tags (or turn them off)
- *(Maybe)* Add some individual noindex tags to prevent specific WordPress posts and pages from showing up on SERPs
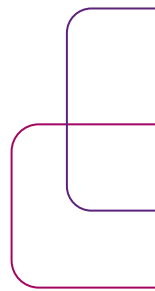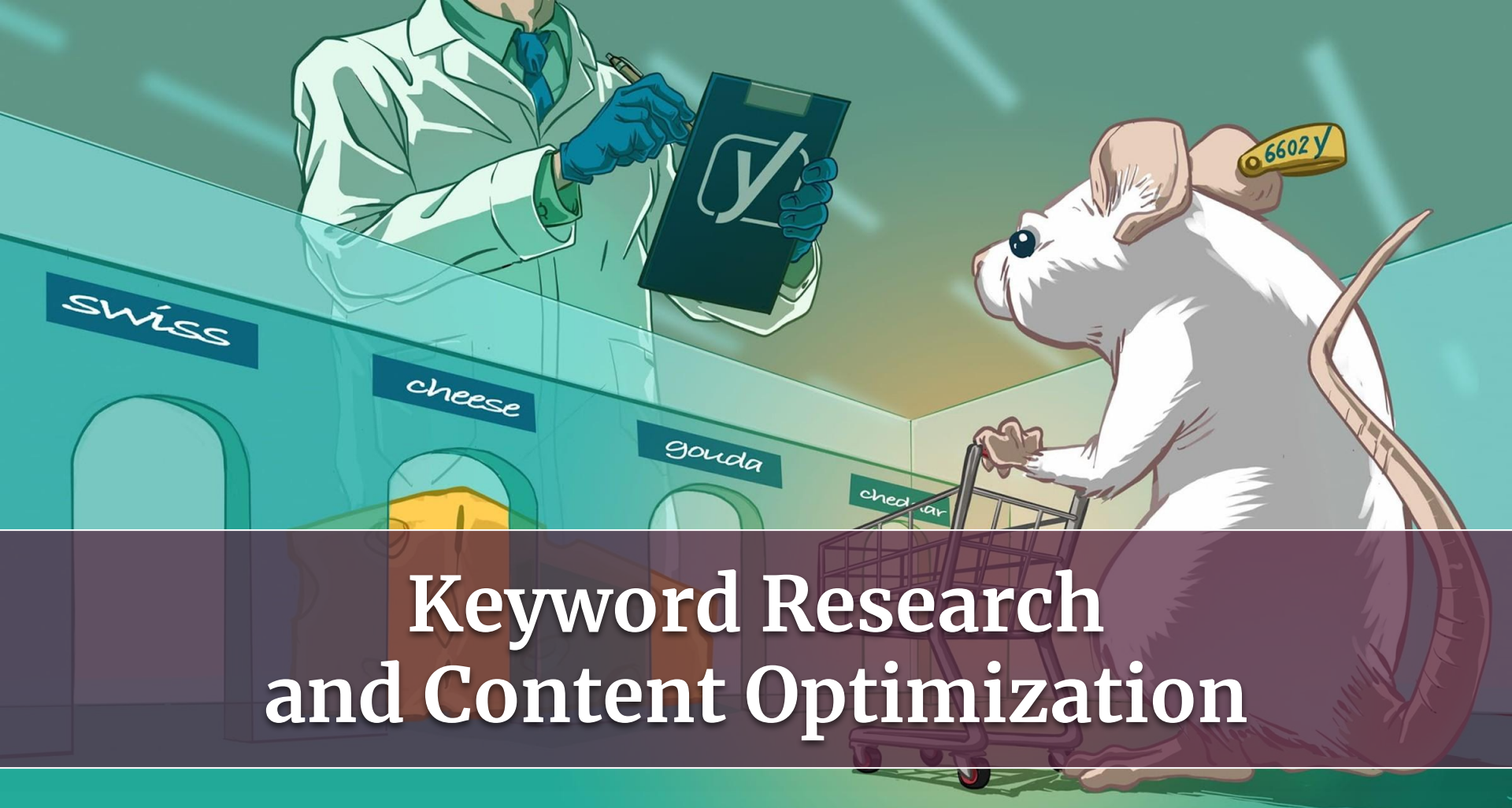
Keyword Research
and Content Optimization

The goals of keyword research

- Generate ideas for content

- *What are people interested in?*

- Match your content to your audience

- *How are people searching for things?*

- Use the best phrasing for the situation

Free tools for keyword research

- **Google Trends** (trends.google.com)

- **SEMRush** (semrush.com) *(free trial)*

- **Yoast + SEMRush integration**

- **Ahrefs Free SEO Tools** (ahrefs.com/free-seo-tools)

- **ChatGPT/CoPilot/Gemini** (AI stuff)

Easter food
Topic

+ Compare

United States ▼   Past 12 months ▼   All categories ▼   Web Search ▼

Interest over time ⑦

100			
75			
50			
25			
Mar 19, 2023	Jul 9, 2023	Oct 29, 2023	Feb 18, 2024

broccoli rabe — Search term
broccolini — Search term

+ Add comparison

United States ▾ | Past 12 months ▾ | All categories ▾ | Web Search ▾

Interest over time ⑦

100
75
50
25

Average

Mar 19, 2023   Jul 23, 2023   Nov 26, 2023
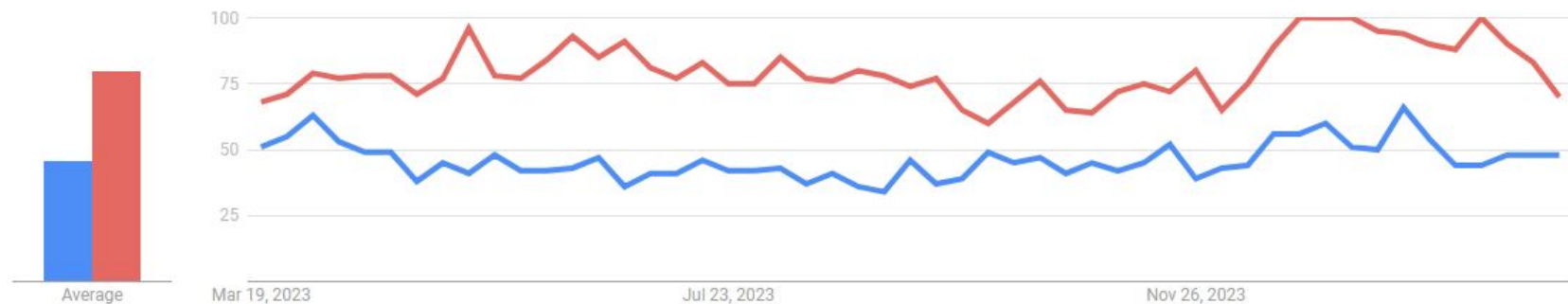
Compared breakdown by subregion

● broccoli rabe   ● broccolini

Sort: Interest for broccoli rabe ▾

1	New Jersey	
2	Connecticut	
3	New York	
4	Delaware	
5	Rhode Island	

Color intensity represents percentage of searches LEARN MORE

‹ Showing 1-5 of 51 subregions ›

Related topics			Top ▾				Related queries		Rising ▾			
1	Easter - Festivity	100	▬▬▬▬▬				1	easter dinner 2024				Breakout
2	Dinner - Topic	74	▬▬▬▬				2	restaurants serving easter dinner 2023				Breakout
3	Idea - Topic	27	▬				3	whole foods easter dinner 2023				Breakout
4	Food - Food	12	▪				4	easter buffet 2023 near me				Breakout
5	Meal - Topic	11	▪				5	costco easter dinner 2023				Breakout

Showing 1-5 of 25 topics ⟨ ⟩

Showing 1-5 of 25 queries ⟨ ⟩

Related topics ⑦	Rising ▾ ⬇ <> ⤴
1 Easter Brunch 2024 - Event	Breakout
2 Green bean casserole - Casserole	+70%
3 Ina Garten - American cook and author	+70%
4 Entrée - Type of dish	+60%
5 Bob Evans - Topic	+60%

‹ Showing 1-5 of 8 topics ›

Related queries ⑦	Rising ▾ ⬇ <> ⤴
1 ina garten easter dinner menu	Breakout
2 vegetarian easter dishes	Breakout
3 what to make for easter dinner besides ham	+4,750%
4 easter dinner for two	+180%
5 easy easter meal ideas	+130%

‹ Showing 1-5 of 25 queries ›

Keyword Overview: easter ham ⊕

🇺🇸 United States ⌄   🖥 Desktop ⌄   Mar 13, 2024 ⌄   USD

Overview   Bulk Analysis

📍 Select location ⌄

↻ Update metrics **0/1,000**   ⬆ Export to PDF

Volume
2.9K 🇺🇸

Keyword Difficulty
53% 🟠
Difficult

You will need to have 22 referring domains and optimized content to compete here.

Global Volume
3.8K

🇺🇸 US	▬▬▬▬▬	2.9K
🇨🇦 CA	▬	260
🇬🇧 UK	▬	110
🇦🇺 AU	▬	40
🇩🇪 DE	▬	30
🇪🇸 ES	▬	30
Other	▬	420

Intent
Informational

Trend

CPC
$1.68

Competitive Density
0.98

PLA   Ads
3   **3**

Keyword ideas

Keyword Variations

7.8K Total volume: **50.7K**

Keywords	Volume	KD %
easter ham	2.9K	53 🟠
easter ham recipes	1.9K	49 🟡
easter ham recipe	1.0K	49 🟡
recipe for easter ham	1.0K	50 🟠
easter side dishes with ham	880	37 🟡

View all 7,759 keywords

Questions

546 Total volume: **6.4K**

Keywords	Volume	KD %
how to cook easter ham	260	49 🟡
why do we eat ham on easter	260	41 🟡
where is hamas located in the middle east	210	81 🔴
why do we eat ham at easter	210	41 🟡
how much ham per person for easter dinner	170	49 🟡

View all 546 keywords

Keyword Clusters

Get keyword clusters **automatically**

⦿ **easter ham**
- glaze for easter ham
- ham on easter
- easter ham dinner menu
- holiday ham recipe
- best holiday ham

View all clusters

SERP Analysis

View SERP ⬆ Export

Results
49.9M

SERP Features
🔗 ☆ 🖼 ⏵ 💬 🍴

| 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 | 71-80 | 81-90 | 91-100 |

| URL	Page AS	Ref. Domains	Backlinks	Search Traffic	URL Keywords
🍴 Recipes					
https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a10963/glazed-easter-ham/ ⬈ **thepioneerwoman.com**					
https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/220962/easter-ham/ ⬈ **allrecipes.com**					
https://www.dinneratthezoo.com/easter-ham-recipe/ ⬈ **dinneratthezoo.com**					
💬 People also ask					
https://www.colemannatural.com/blog/how-to-choose-an-easter-ham/ ⬈ **colemannatural.com**					
https://www.al.com/life/2021/04/why-do-we-eat-ham-for-easter.html ⬈ **al.com**					
https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/keep-your-easter-ham-and-eggs-pathogen-free-year ⬈ **foodsafety.gov**					
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJKfn3wIvH8 ⬈ **youtube.com**					
1 https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a10963/glazed-... ⬈ **thepioneerwoman.com** ☆ Reviews 🖼 Image	61	113	549	5.4K	6.7K
2 https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/220962/easter-ham/ ⬈ **allrecipes.com** ☆ Reviews 🖼 Image	28	17	31	364	137
3 https://www.foodandwine.com/holidays-events/easter/easter-ham-recipes ⬈ **foodandwine.com**	23	18	29	315	

?

How to use keywords?

- In the meta title and headline (h1), meta description

- In the body copy (*prominently*, if it's the target KWP)

- In image alts (where appropriate)

- **In associated social media posts!**
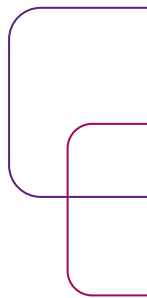
What about questions?

- Answering the questions related to the KWP is a great way to increase content in a post.

- Introduce the question (and answer) in a subheading (h2 or h3) then rephrase the question in the body copy and provide answer in the first sentence beneath the subheading.
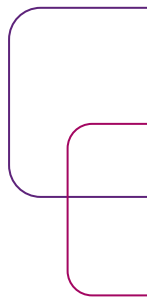
Above all else, be helpful

- Use your keyword research to provide answers and information that your users need (or want) to know.

- Provide unique perspectives and added value.

- *Remember:* value will win over sales and gimmicks.

How to *not* fall behind in SEO

- Adapt to AI and Machine Learning

- Focus on User Experience (UX)

- Utilize Structured Data

- Voice Search Optimization

- Content Freshness and Relevance

- Monitor and Adapt to Algorithm Changes

In Summary...

- Build a strong foundation
- Employ effective content strategies
- Keep up with current SEO trends
- Embrace future-proofing tech
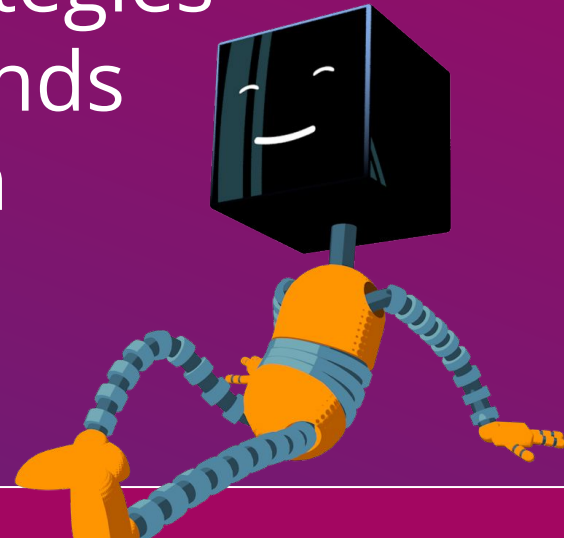
Let's stay in touch!

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