$30K saved in three calls at niche SEO tool

Revising the product direction to avoid a clear dead end. In a rush.

Context

SEOmonitor is an analytics platform for 2000 UK & US agencies. Each of them tracks tens of thousands keywords.

In 2023, the team focused on the new product for AI Content Writing. Team needed to deliver it fast.

Challenge

In a rush, CEO drafted a product direction and requested to build it with no questions. It was a path to dead-end.

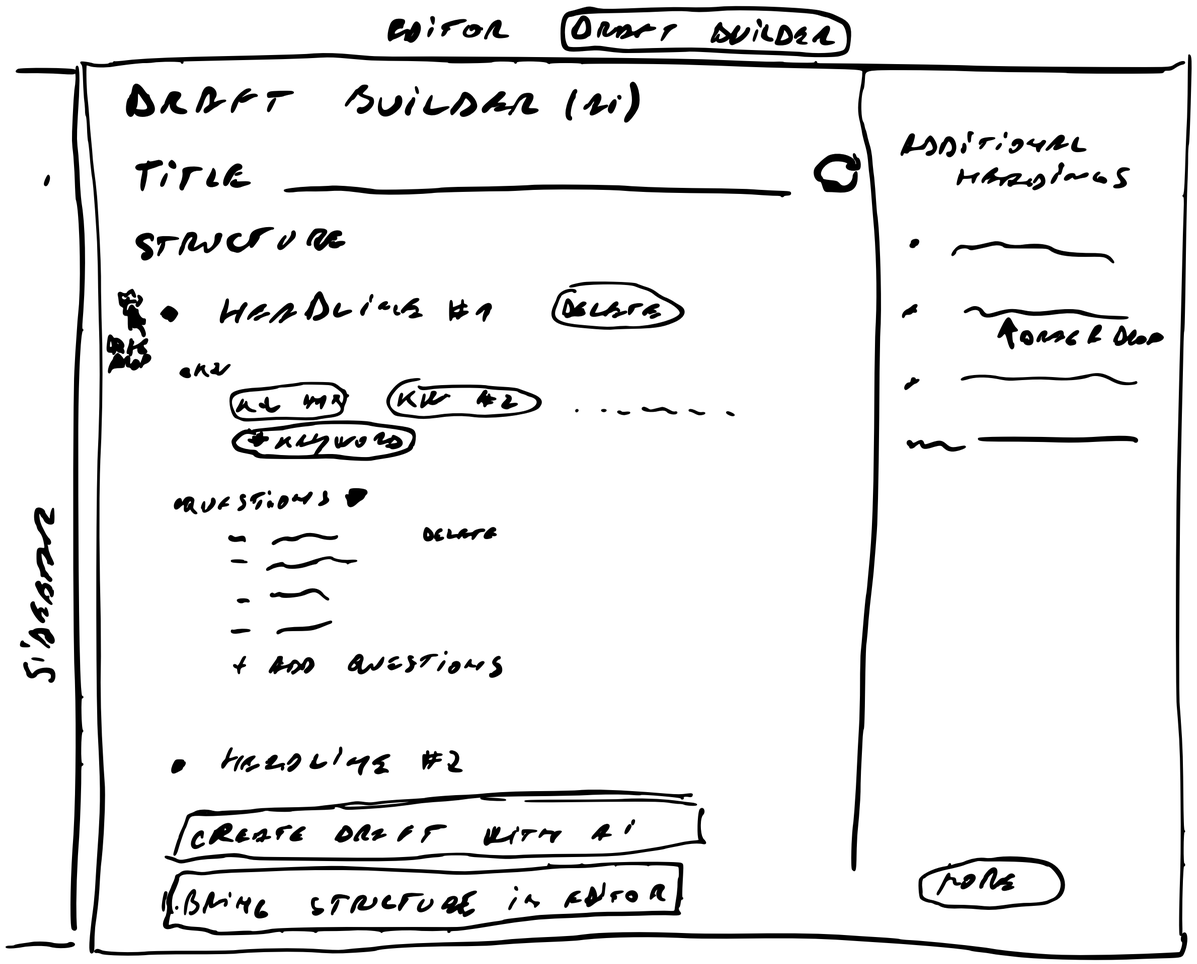
Redundancy
Despite the simple product idea, the direction was counter-intuitive, hard to implement, and scale.

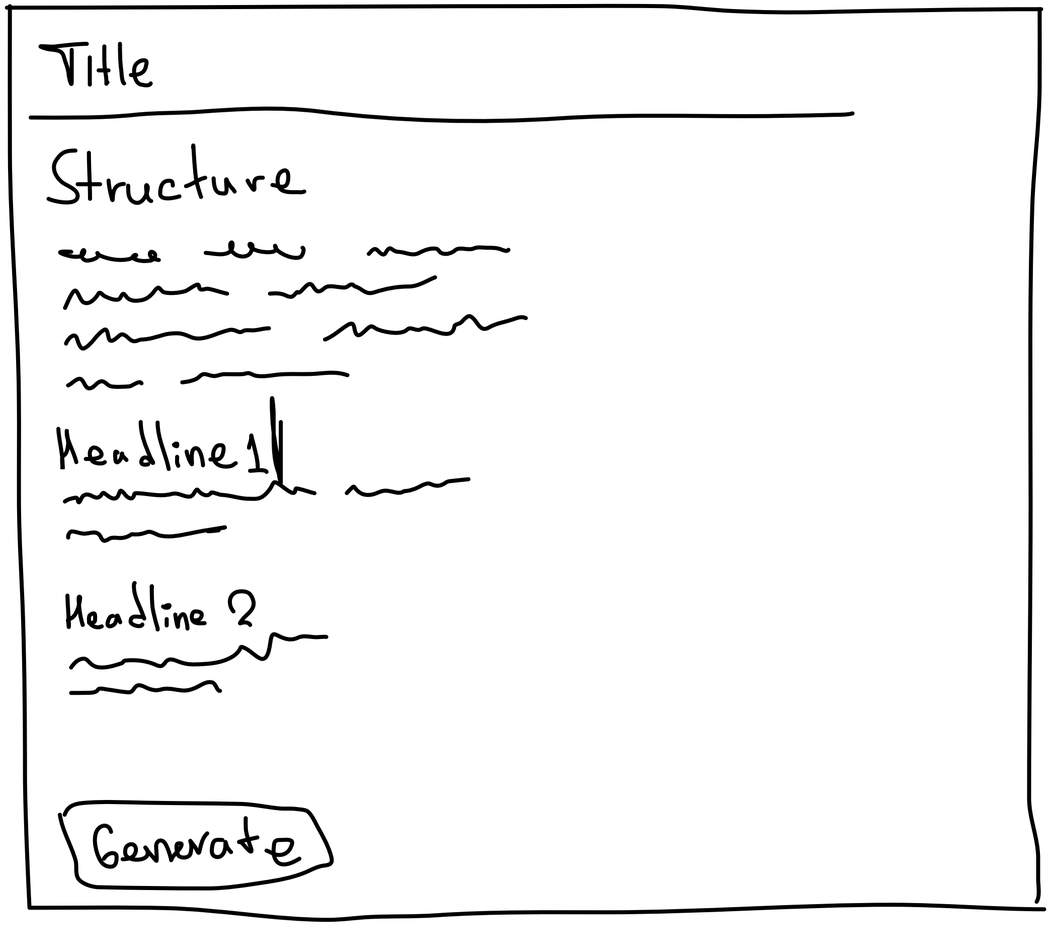
Rush mode
Designers knew that direction was destructive, but were frustrated by the fact that there is no room for discussion.

First call

I explained designers that it's our responsibility to signal the concern, even if there's no room for it.

We audit the direction and drafted the simpler one.





Proposed direction

User edits the AI-article structure through buttons, selects, and drag-n-drop blocks. It was hard to prototype, implement, user, and explain.

Our direction

User edits the AI-article structure in the same way as everywhere: through text editor. It was simple, intuitive, and we had all the components in place.

Didn’t work. Blocked by the rush mode.

Designer talked to a manger, but it didn’t have any effect on the direction.

Second call

We decided to escalate problem again, but shape it differently.

Instead, we signalled that rush mode burns thousands of euros.

Communication problem

If we want to deliver good results in a rush mode, we need a different process for communication. Right now the product is in a big risk, and we can’t align on this fact.

Product risk

With the current direction, team risks to spend over 30K euros to deliver the first version, roll-out the release, and build it again.

Proposed process.

Product designer should be part of the initial product direction discussions, even if team is in a rush. Same rule works for the major design solutions.

Benefit

This way design team understands the problems and ensures that direction doesn’t lead to the dead-end.

Section 4

Background

I understand that it sounds impossible right now and feels really hard to change the schedule. But I believe we can’t proceed with the current process, otherwise it will be the bad job.

This process could work on small projects with as a compromise. But for the whole product relaunch the compromise is too dangerous.

Section 3

Stakeholders		What is expected	Reality		Procedure
Cosmin	Vision	We can align async with drafts and text feedback	CEO	Vision	1. Product designer should gather feedback directly from stakeholders. a. Right on the meeting. b. On another call with the author of the feedback, in case the feedback was received async. 2. This way product designer and architect will be aware of the context and share the same understanding about the decisions. 3. Team will be able to validate the design assumptions on the go in the same it can validate them with technical direction. 4. Validation of the design assumptions will reduce re-iterations on design, development, and shaping.
Dragos	Technical direction		CTO	Technical direction	
Claudiu	Alignment		PM	Alignment	
Mitia	Product design		Designer	Product design	
Kostia	Design system		Consultant	Design system architect	
		We can finalise the design in one day and agree that it’s ready for the implementation	CEO	Vision	
			CTO	Technical direction	
			PM	Alignment	
			Designer	Product design	
			Consultant	Design system architect	
		We can save limited resources	Each iteration of the async feedback		

Frame 6264

Designer
€XXX/week

Figma operations
User flows
User experience
Solution exploration
Design system
Consistency
Known patterns
Documentation
Problem understanding

Frame 6265

Frontend
€XXX/week

Worked out.

CEO agreed to have the call.

We also agreed to expand this process on the other projects.

Third call.

Together with designers and management we tested each possible direction on a wireframes.

The goal was to end the call in a full alignment on the vision.

Pros

We have additional control on the use input and format.

Works separately from the WYSIWYG

Seamlessly replaces the existing flow

Cons

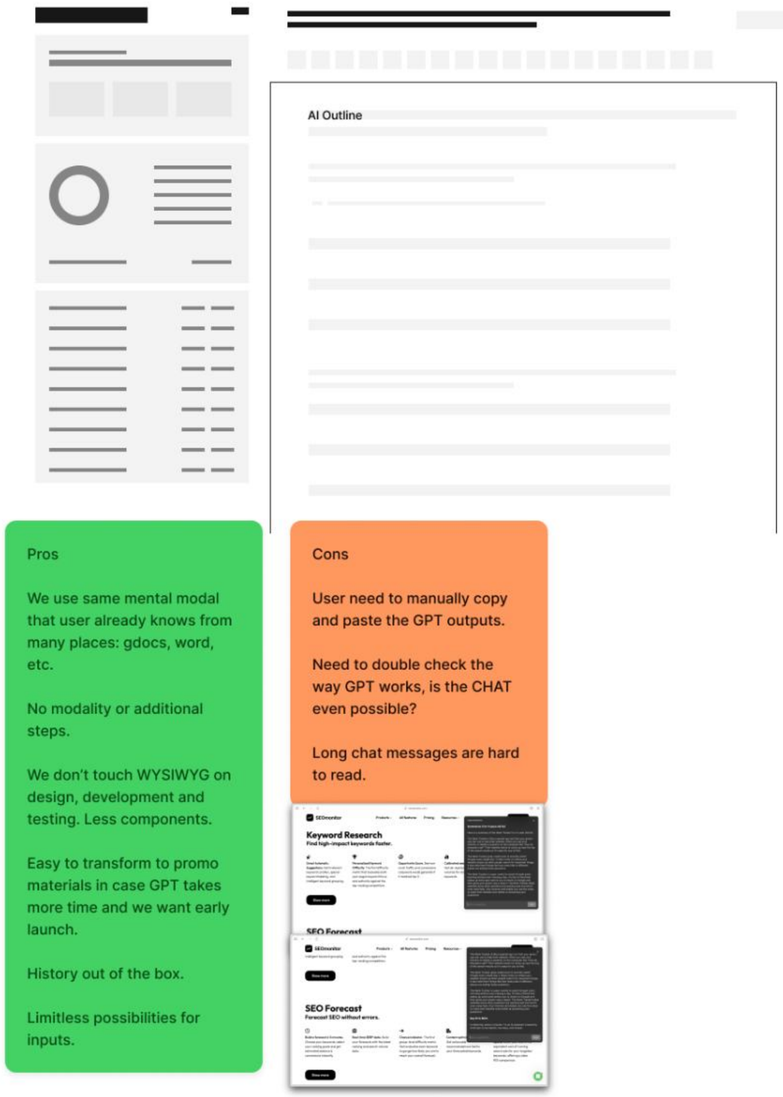
User needs to have additional mental model for the interface. Form looks complex.

We need to introduce additional components: keyword pills (?), draggable headings, questions (additional/deletion), layouts. Affects design, implementation and testing.

Critical

Modality of the interface requires constant switch between draft builder and actual content.

We can't see how come up with a solution for iteration history of user + AI editing. It's not the easiest one.



Pros

We use same mental modal that user already knows from many places: gdocs, word, etc.

No modality or additional steps.

We don't touch WYSIWYG on design, development and testing. Less components.

Easy to transform to promo materials in case GPT takes more time and we want early launch.

History out of the box.

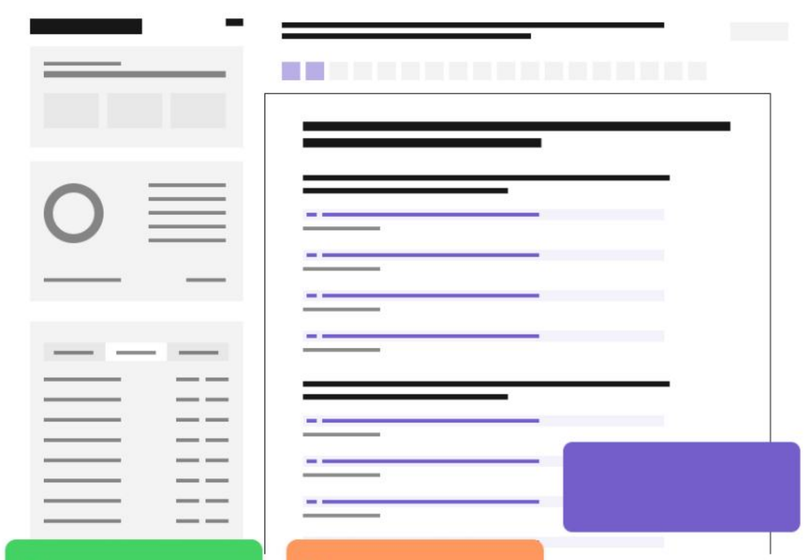
Limitless possibilities for inputs.

Cons

User need to manually copy and paste the GPT outputs.

Need to double check the way GPT works, is the CHAT even possible?

Long chat messages are hard to read.



Pros

We use same mental modal that user already knows from many places: gdocs, word, etc.

No modality or additional steps.

Less components.

Cons

We don't know how WYSIWIG editor works and the scope of its implementation

We will need to come up with a solution for iteration history of user + AI editing. It's not the easiest one.

Aligned on the problem

To ensure that we tackle same issue.

Clarified the initial solution

Otherwise we can't compare the options.

Discussed the options

Go trough pros and cons of each one.

Made the final bet

Choose the best option and tweak it a bit to align.

Aligned!
We went with the simple direction.

With a full alignment we easily moved to the high-fidelity stage.

seomonitor.com

KEYWORDS | TRAFFIC | FORECAST | CONTENT | RESEARCH | SIGNALS | M

Content Writer

24

Outline | Article

85

Score

Based on analysing the **top 10 ranking competitors >**

Title	70%
Headings	70%
Coverage	0%
Wordcount	
Images	
Uniqueness	

SEO brief

Keyword	Volume	Presence
Title	**52K**	**100%**
long-tail	22K	T
long-tailed keywords	20K	T
long-tail keywords are	10K	T
Headings	**4.2K**	**80%**
keyword longtail	880	C
what is a long tail keyword	2K	C
long tail keyword examples	1.6K	C

Long Tail Keywords Long 232

Traffic **3.5K/mo**

H2 H3 H4 ¶

Here is your AI Outline for the topic, aligned with keywords and brief

Regenerate Outline | Generate Article

Title

Unraveling the Power of Long-Tail Keywords in SEO

In the intricate world of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), the prominence of long-tail keywords has become a focal point for digital marketers and website owners alike. Understanding their significance and leveraging their potential can significantly impact the visibility and success of online content.

What Are Long-Tail Keywords?

Keywords to use in this section: keywords long-tail, what is a long tail keyword, long-tail keywords are, what are long tail keywords examples, longtail search, long-tail seo, examples of long tail keywords

Questions to answer:

- What defines a long-tail keyword in SEO?
- How do long-tail keywords differ from short-tail keywords?
- Why are long-tail keywords essential in SEO strategies?
- How do search intent and long-tail keywords relate to each other?

The Significance of Long-Tail Keywords in SEO

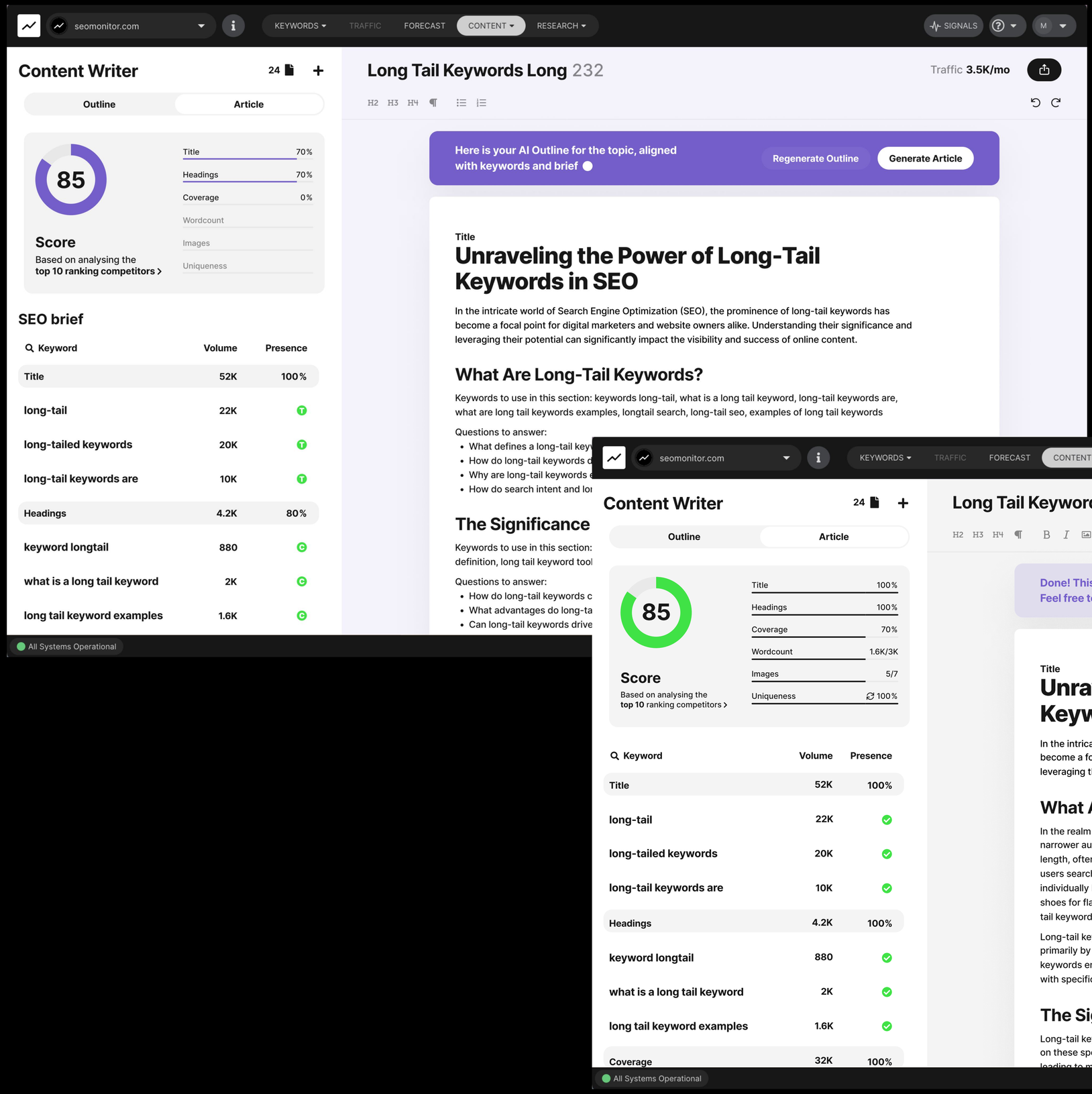
Keywords to use in this section: long-tail seo, examples of long tail keywords, long tailed keywords definition, long tail keyword tools, long tail content

Questions to answer:

- How do long-tail keywords contribute to better targeting?
- What advantages do long-tail keywords offer over broader, competitive terms?
- Can long-tail keywords drive higher conversion rates? How?

All Systems Operational | Report Bug | Contact us!

In the new vision, user edited the AI-outline right in the document.



Different colour schemes helped to distinct outline from the final article.

AI-generated outline for your topic based on the brief and the structure of the top ranking articles.

Regenerate Outline

Generate Article

Title Regenerate

Good coffee vs bad coffee: Understanding the difference

The essential characteristics t coffee

Keywords for SEO: good coffee bad coffee, bad coffee,

Guiding questions: What are the key factors that disting

How to identify and avoid com coffee

Keywords for SEO: bad coffee, crappy coffee, good coff

Guiding questions: What are the most frequent errors th

Keyword	Volume	Presence	
Title optimization	302K	100%	
good coffee bad coffee	302K		T
Headings & Coverage	542K	55%	94%
coffee beans	170K	H	C
coffee grinder	91K	H	C
pour-over coffee	41K	H	C
specialty coffee	33K	H	C
cold brew coffee	27K	H	C

After months of improvements, the direction still works perfectly.

Results

We successfully prevented the dead-end product direction that could've cost around $30K.

Product is successfully launched. The direction still works perfectly, and team learned the way to work in rush.

Special thanks to Mitia Morovov-Sheiner, Claudiu Stanscu, Dragos Stanciu, and Cosmin Negrescu.

Testimonials

Mitia Morovov-Sheiner, Product Designer at SEOmonitor

It was great to see that we improved not just product design, but also processes and culture. I was really proud of the final design we made.

Zee Kazmi
SEO Performance Director at Brave Bison
$27M/year

This is probably the most aesthetically pleasing user experience any SEO tool provides. It's straight-forward as well, leaving out ambiguities.

Multiply Outputs with Bold design moves from your new Head of Design and mentor.

For startups, agencies, and designers.

Shared at $99.

With love.

*

KK