



SEO NEWSLETTER

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PENGUIN 1.1 UPDATE RELEASED + RECOVERING FROM THE PENGUIN UPDATE

Last Friday, Google slowly pushed out the first update to its Penguin algorithm named Penguin 1.1. Matt Cutts confirmed this through a Twitter post. Below is the screenshot of what he mentioned – A data refresh affecting "English" searches by less than 0.1%. We feel this is just one of the many updates to be introduced under the Penguin algorithm change.



Anyways, moving back to April 24, Penguin was strongly introduced to aim sites specifically violating Google's quality guidelines. However, we also have several examples of sites been hit which were not necessarily spamming Google. The SEO community was taken aback by this update. Focusing more on quality content and introducing over-optimization penalties by Google has in fact resulted in drastic changes in organic rankings as well as traffic.

We were asked by many agencies to consult on this front. We did an in-depth research on sites which were affected by this update and below are some important findings:

Most of the sites had something in common i.e. too many links from the same site or IP address. This pattern is mostly found on blogs especially links given from blogroll (which we call site-wide links).

Keywords were over-targeted by using the same anchor text for the sole purpose of ranking that particular term. This was found off-site as well as on-site.

They were getting links from spammy blog comments, spun article content, low quality link networks as well as link farms.

So, what are the best practices, which we are implementing to recover if you have been hit by this update or stay protected from future updates?

We diversify your backlink profile by getting links from different types of websites – This includes regular websites, blog posts, reviews, directories, social bookmarking sites, article syndication, video sharing, press release channels, local directories, coupon sites and even social media profiles.

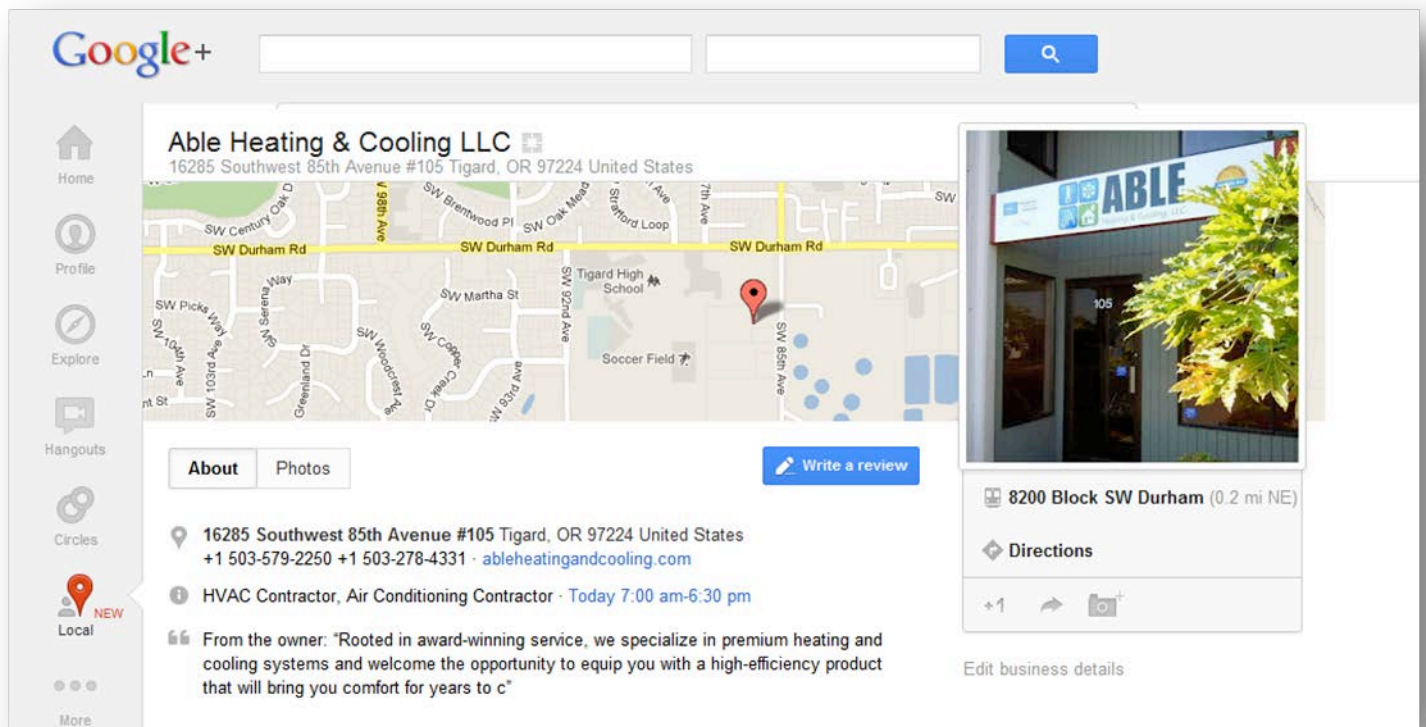
- a) **We vary the anchor text** – target revolving keywords along with website name, website URL, etc. to avoid over optimization for a single term. For example, if you want to rank for "baby toys"; we make sure to also target these keywords in your strategy "baby toys", "baby learning toys", "baby toys by XYZ", "XYZ.com", etc.
- b) **We avoid getting links from blog rolls i.e. site-wide links** – this also includes footer links with keywords as well.
- c) **We get you links from various Top Level Domains (TLD)** – While we agree that links from .gov, .edu and .org domains are given high importance, Google would also like to see your site getting links from .info, .net, .co and .biz websites.
- d) **We deep link your internal site pages** – Wherever applicable we ensure to get links to your inner pages as well. Linking to just the home page can also get you in trouble according to this update.
- e) **We don't use spun or spammy content** – either on the website or for article syndication. We make sure that the content is 100% unique. For article syndication, each article is submitted to one site to avoid duplication.

We do not involve your site in questionable linking schemes like cross-domain linking, links from low quality sites, links from spun articles, bulk directory submissions and social bookmarking, etc.

We avoid excessive on-page optimization by making sure to optimize page titles, meta tags and content as per the quality guidelines.

Finally, we will be continuously tracking & observing upcoming algorithmic changes by Google so that we can stay updated with the latest SEO strategies.

On May 31, last week, Google rolled out this change of integrating Google Places into Google+. This means you now have a completely different Place page for your business which looks similar to your Google+ business page. Here's a screenshot:



Google+ Local also integrates Zagat, the restaurant guide company Google purchased in 2011, and has adopted Zagat's 30-point scoring system in the consumer reviews of local businesses.

With this change, it's quite evident that Google is pushing local business owners to use Google+. Meanwhile, here's something Google has posted that could be of help:

[Learn more about Google+ Local.](#)

Also, check out these help center articles for specific steps on how to move your Google Places content into Google+ Local, and for more in-depth explanations about what will happen to your old reviews and photos:

- Moving Google Places content into Google+ Local
- Reviews and photos not moved to Google+ Local

Viewing your Google Places reviews without signing up for Google+ Identities in Google+ Local

What Has Changed With Google+ Local

Uploading Videos and "Post to Place Page" feature has been disabled.

The verified Google Places listing will not display a check-mark on Google+ Local. However we believe that Google is working on this.

The previous Google Place Page link will automatically redirect to the new Google+ Local page.

Recommended Actions

- a) If you already have a verified listing, there is no need to verify it again in Google+ Local. However, if your listing is still not verified, make sure to do so ASAP.
- b) Optimize your listing by providing a well written, keyword-rich (but not spammy) description of your business in the "About" section.
- c) Further optimize with photos of your showroom, staff, dealership events, and satisfied customers. Make a note that the actual profile image is now 250x250 pixels.
- d) Claim your Google+ business page as well if you have not done so since Google will be combining any Google+ business page similar Google Places listings.
- e) Monitor reviews from customers on Google+ Local and respond to them through Google Places for Business.
- f) Submit the New Google+ Local link to social bookmarking websites for fresh crawling.

Stay tuned for more posts and updates from us as Google has promised it will bring in additional changes in near future.

3 GOOGLE WEBMASTER TOOLS REVAMPED

There have been some updates to Google's Webmaster Tools this month.

With the help of the new dashboard, we can get an overview of crawl status, search queries & number of URLs indexed for a particular website. The navigation bar on the left has now grouped similar features into the following categories:

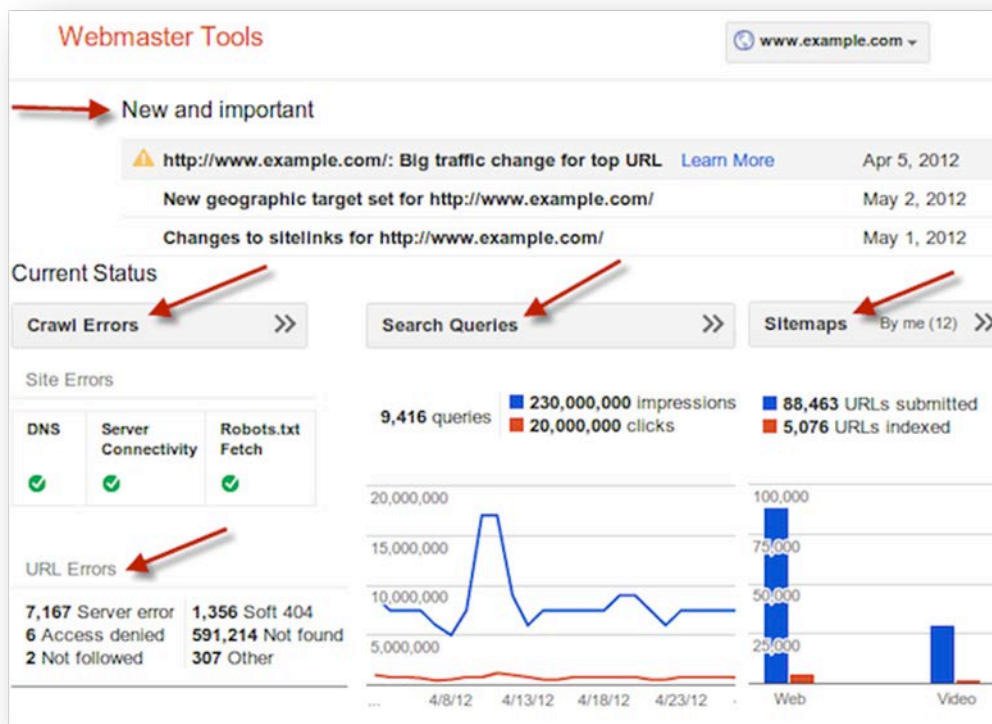
Configuration: Things you configure and generally don't change often.

Health: Where you look to make sure things are fine.

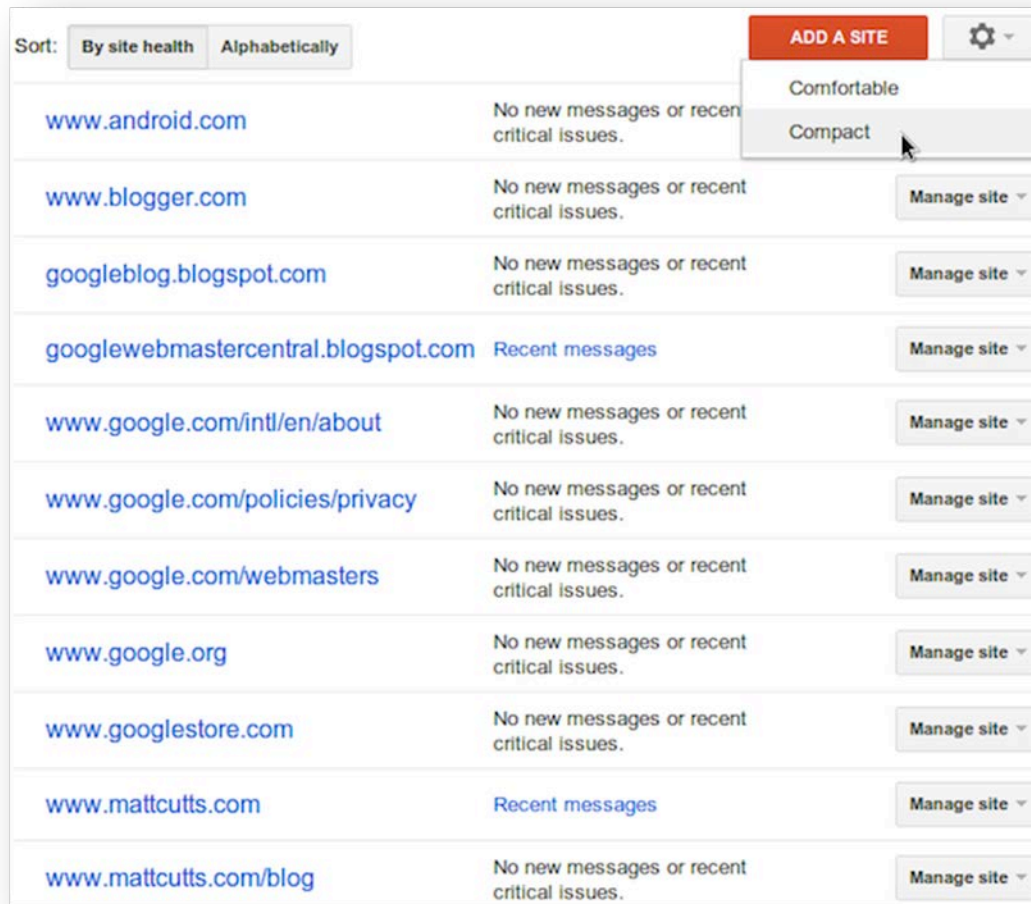
Traffic: Where you go to understand how your site is doing in Google search, who's linking to you; where you can explore the data about your site.

Optimization: Where you can find ideas to enhance your site.

The dashboard now shows you a list of the newest and most important messages in the center of the page, with 3 status charts at the bottom: Crawl Errors, Search Queries, and Sitemaps. These help you get an indication of what needs your immediate attention without having to go deeper.



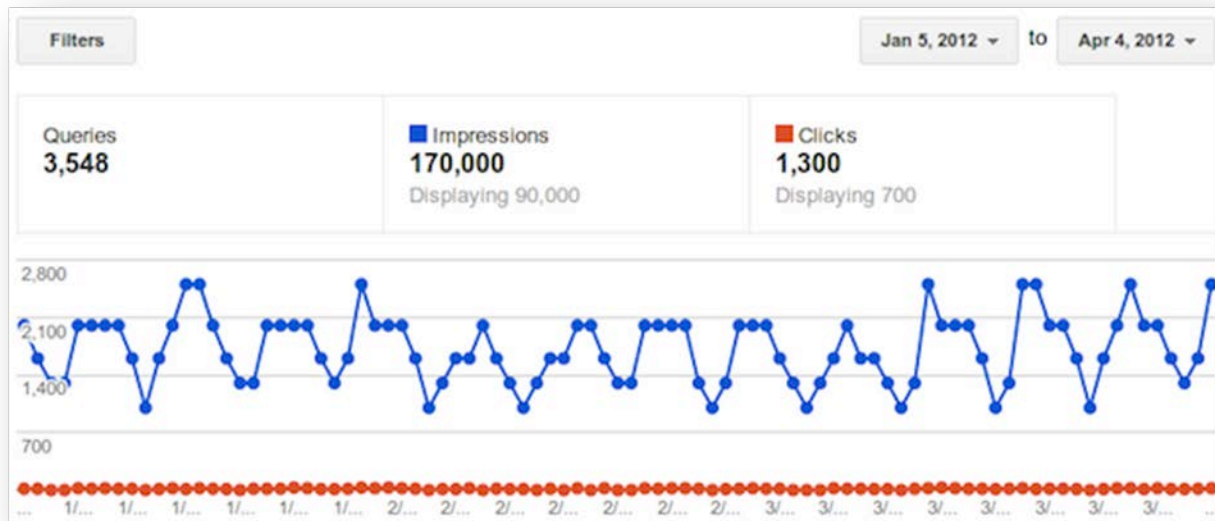
For those who manage a larger number of sites, Google has also added in a compact view making it easier to see more sites to manage at once in the list



You can now see up to 90 days of historical data. Showing changes however still has a 30-day limit.



Also, as soon as you verify ownership, your sites basic data will be visible instead of having to wait.



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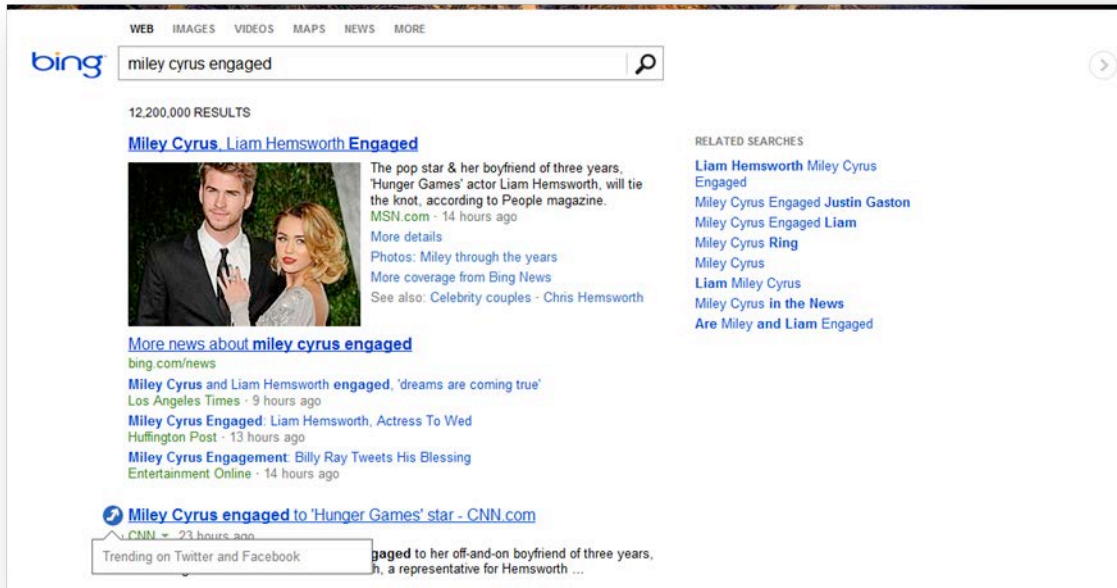
BING UPDATES ITSELF WITH DEEPER SOCIAL INTEGRATION



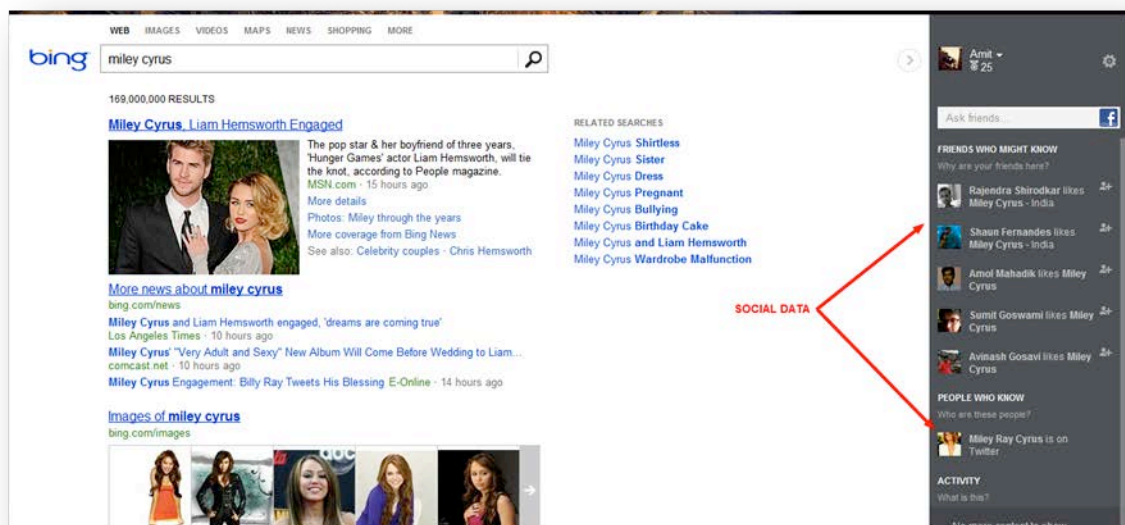
On May 10, Software giant Microsoft introduced an update to Bing, making search results more personalized featuring a deeper integration with Social elements. Bing will now be using data mainly from Facebook including Twitter, Foursquare, Quora, LinkedIn and Google+. "This notion of a query and web results can become a conversation with your friends," said Adam Sohn, general manager of Bing.

The "New Bing" (as Microsoft calls it) look features a three-column design.

- a) The column on far left is the widest of the three. It features organic search results which you are familiar with. Apart from this it also features trending topics from Facebook and Twitter.
- b) The middle column, which Bing calls as "Snapshot", features relevant information about certain things like movies, restaurants, events, and businesses. It's also where Bing will show the Related Searches as well as PPC ads.



c) The third column on far right, called the "Sidebar" is the most interesting part of this makeover. This column will show you a list of your Facebook friends who might give you "search advice". Here, users can also add comments on Facebook and make Bing results as their posts. A section in the Sidebar also shows "top experts and enthusiasts" who will be able to help you better about a particular topic.



d) Even though Google tried to venture out with Google +, it was not a huge success. First of its kind, it's interesting to note that Bing is the first to show real-time search results from Facebook and Twitter.

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