



SEO
NEWSLETTER

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Google's Experiments Gone Wrong - Domain Diversity and Shrinking First Page Results

It looks as if Google is trying to move away from the traditional 10 listings and only displaying 5 to 8 results. Some "smart" PHD at Google decided that "trusted" domains should be given preference for first page rankings. Not only that, Google has removed two domain restrictions for first page results. The result is that many local keywords and long tail keywords are dominated by sites like Yelp, Amazon and other brand websites. In some cases, 5 to 6 results are from same domain. This goes against the spirit of the web because it means that "trusted" domains get unprecedented visibility at the cost of new small business websites. It's even bad for searchers because now their choices are limited. They are fed multiple irrelevant results from "trusted" or "Brand" domains. It's now even easier than ever for one site to dominate all those results. If you are not happy with the current state of things, you are not alone. Industry experts, like Danny Sullivan and Dr. Pete, are also criticizing this change. Google's spokesperson acknowledged the problem by saying "There's always room for improvement, so we're going to keep working on getting the mix right." However there is no information coming from GooglePlex about how they will fix these experiments which are hitting small businesses.

Just a Few Blue Links

We started getting some indications a couple of weeks ago about this change. Here's an example for a search on "Overstock" showing just 6 results:

+You Search Images Maps Play YouTube News Gmail Documents Calendar More -

Google overstock

Search About 41,400,000 results (0.21 seconds)

Web [Overstock.com: Online Shopping - Bedding, Furniture, Electronics ...](#)
www.overstock.com/
 Let **Overstock.com** help you discover designer brands and home goods at the lowest prices online. See for yourself why shoppers love our selection and ...
 + Show stock quote for OSTK

Images

Maps

Videos

News

Shopping

More

New York, NY
Change location

Show search tools

[Furniture](#)
Furniture for everyday discount prices on Overstock.com! \$2.95 ...

[Bedding & Bath](#)
Bedding & Bath for everyday discount prices on Overstock ...

[Clothing & Shoes](#)
Clothing & Shoes for everyday discount prices on Overstock ...

[Home & Garden](#)
Home & Garden for everyday discount prices on Overstock ...

[Electronics](#)
Electronics for everyday discount prices on Overstock.com! \$2.95 ...

[Jewelry](#)
Rings - Wedding Rings - Earrings - Bracelets - Necklaces - ...

[More results from overstock.com »](#)

Overstock.com Cars: Online Shopping for Cars, Trucks, and ...
cars.overstock.com/
 Shop from thousands of new and used cars with upfront pricing at Overstock.com cars. Get an actual discounted price online without talking to a dealer. You recently searched for online shopping.

Overstock.com (Overstock) on Twitter
twitter.com/Overstock
 @Overstock: Hi! We're the Social Media team at **Overstock.com**, here to answer questions and know how you feel. Check back for Twitter-exclusive deals.

Overstock.com - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overstock.com
Overstock.com (NASDAQ: OSTK), also known by its shortcut, O.co, is an online retailer headquartered in Cottonwood Heights, Utah, near Salt Lake City.

Overstock Coupon Codes: Coupons, Promo Codes, Free Shipping ...
www.retailmenot.com/view/overstock.com
 Jul 30, 2012 – Get average savings of \$16.62 on everything from electronics to home goods with **Overstock** coupons and promo codes. Enjoy free shipping ...

Overstock - Discount Computer Clearance Center Surplus ...
www.tigerdirect.com/applications/overstock/overstock_tlc.asp
 Discount Computer Clearance Center, Surplus Computers, refurbished computers, barebone components, projectors and more at TigerDirect.com.

Ad related to **overstock** [Why this ad?](#)

Overstock.com Shopping
www.overstock.com/ - ★★★★★ 5,542 seller reviews
 Save big on name brands everyday. Order today for \$2.95 shipping.
 Memory Foam - Furniture - Home Decor - Bedding & Bath

Searches related to **overstock**

[overstock shoes](#) [overstock promo code](#)
[overstock watches](#) [overstock auctions](#)
[overstock cars](#) [overstock jewelry](#)
[overstock careers](#) [overstock customer service phone number](#)

Gooooooooooogle >

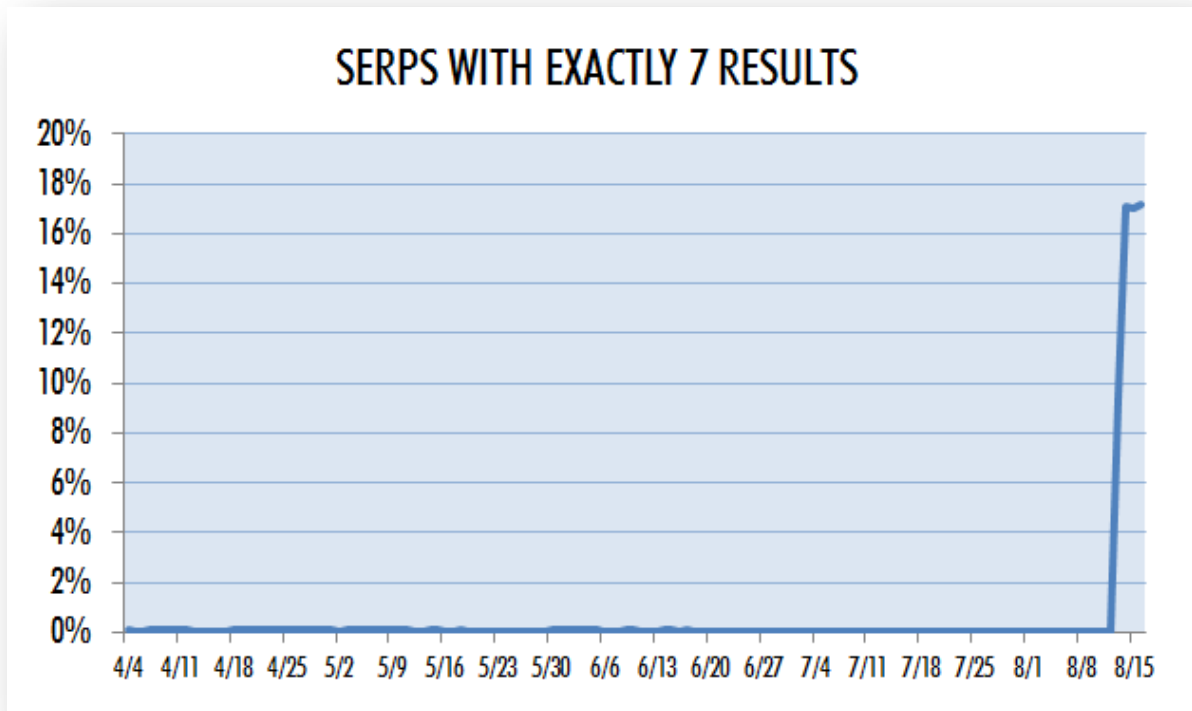
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 [Next](#)

[Advanced search](#) [Search Help](#) [Give us feedback](#)

[Google Home](#) [Advertising Programs](#) [Business Solutions](#) [Privacy & Terms](#)
[About Google](#)

Spike in The Seven SERPs

According to a study by SEOMoz, about 20% of the search engine results pages (SERPs) at Google now show just 7 listings, which started to take effect from August 13, 2012. You can read the full post [here](#).



The Sitelinks Connection

So, why are only 20% of the SERPs different? It seems that Google is tying the new display format to whether “sitelinks” appear with listings. Considering the first example, our initial impression was:

1. Overstock is a brand.
2. The first result has expanded sitelinks.

However, after doing some in-depth research, we noticed that the 7 listings do not necessarily appear just for brands, but for non-branded terms as well. Just take a look at this example:



United States of America

Search

About 2,830,000,000 results (0.00 seconds)

Web

Images

Maps

Videos

News

Shopping

More

New York, NY

Change location

Show search tools

United States - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States

The **United States of America** (commonly called the United States, the U.S., the **USA**, America, and the States) is a federal constitutional republic consisting of ...

[History of the United States](#)

The history of the United States as covered in schools and ...

[Flag of the United States](#)

The national flag of the United States of America, often simply ...

[More results from wikipedia.org »](#)

News for united states of america



[Republican National Convention 2012: Mitt Romney speaks of the 'united America'](#)

[Zap2it.com \(blog\)](#) - by Andrea Reiher - 4 days ago

They pledged allegiance to the **United States of America**. That America, that united America, can unleash an economy that will put Americans ...

[WATCH: Mitt Romney Accidentally Calls the United States a "Company"](#)

[Mother Jones \(blog\)](#) - by Andy Kroll - 3 days ago

United States - CIA - The World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world.../geos/us.html>

Aug 27, 2012 – Britain's American colonies broke with the mother country in 1776 and were recognized as the new nation of the **United States of America** ...

Images for united states of america - Report images



USA.gov: The U.S. Government's Official Web Portal

www.usa.gov/

USA.gov: Home page of the U.S. Government's Official Web Portal for all government transactions, services, and information. It provides direct online access to ...

United States of America travel guide - Wikitravel

wikitravel.org/en/United_States_of_America

Open source travel guide to **United States of America**, featuring up-to-date information on attractions, hotels, restaurants, nightlife, travel tips and more. Free and ...

USA Maps – United States of America, Map of United ... - World Atlas

www.worldatlas.com > World Map > North America

Collection of **USA** maps and information, including links to landforms of the US, physical map of United States, and **United States of America** flags.

WHO | United States of America

www.who.int/countries/usa/en/

Total population, 314,659,000. Gross national income per capita (PPP international \$), 46,790. Life expectancy at birth m/f (years), 76/81. Probability of dying ...

Republic for the united States of America | Freedom is our right

www.republicoftheunitedstates.org/

The re-inhabited Republic for the **united States of America** has been Restored circa 1791 Constitutional Law The year 1776 marked America's victory in the war ...

Searches related to **united states of america**

[facts about united states of america](#)

[united states of america list](#)

[united states of america history](#)

[united states of america map](#)

[united states of america pictures](#)

[united states of america flag](#)

[united states of america constitution](#)

[united states of america outline](#)



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

[Next](#)

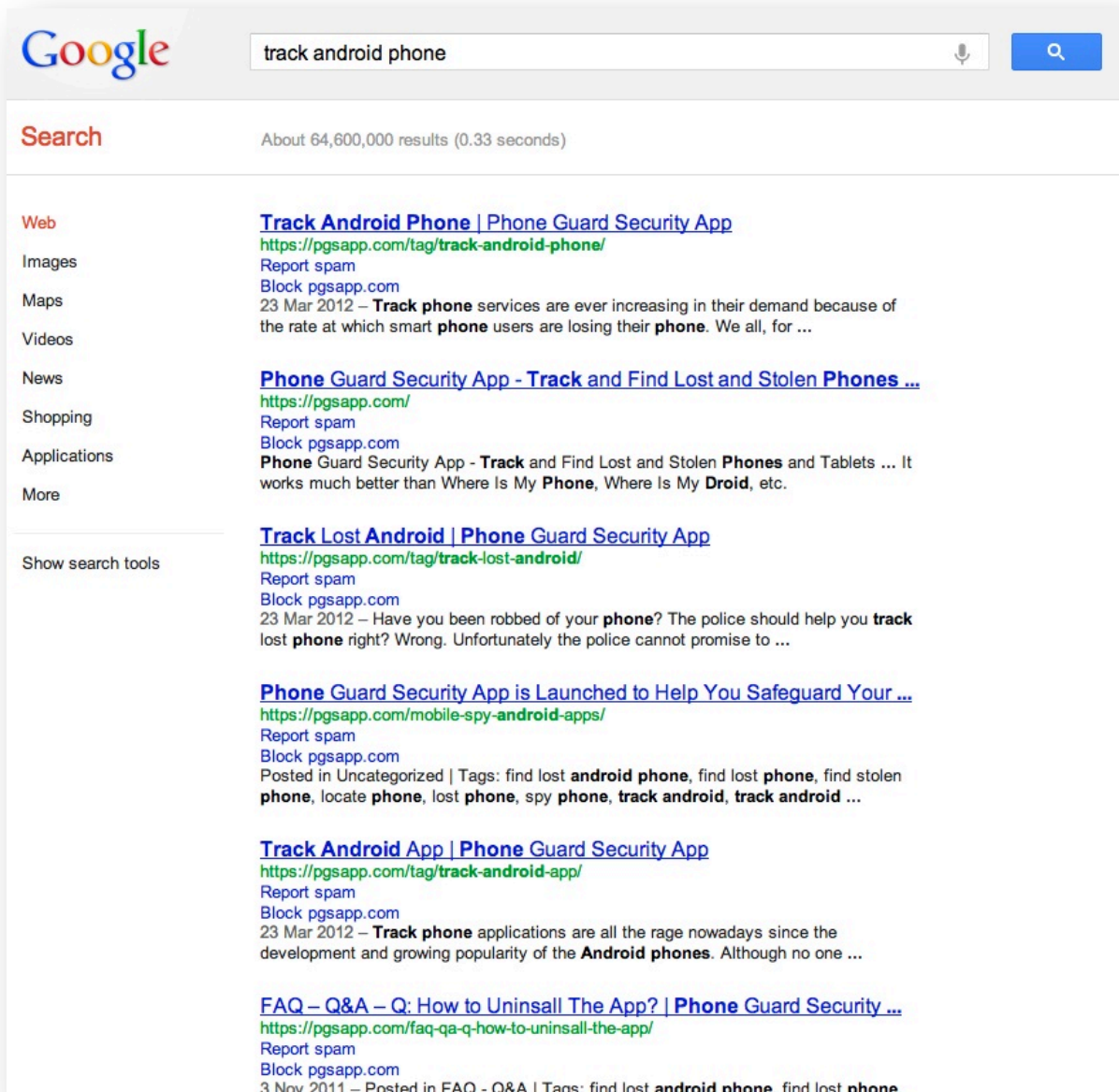
[Advanced search](#) [Search Help](#) [Give us feedback](#)

We are not counting the News and Image results because it's not a regular web search result but rather a box inserted by Google's Universal Search.

Sitelinks often show up for brand names, but not always, as is the case above for a search on "United States of America". So, this concludes that this isn't a change tied just to brands but instead tied to whether sitelinks appear for a particular search or not.

Single Sites Eating Up the Results

Although a bit different but still somewhat related, there seems a rise in Google showing many listings on the first page of results all from the same web site. Consider this example for a search on "Track Android Phone":



The screenshot shows a Google search for "track android phone". The search bar contains the text "track android phone" and a search button. Below the search bar, it says "Search" and "About 64,600,000 results (0.33 seconds)".

On the left side, there is a navigation menu with categories: Web, Images, Maps, Videos, News, Shopping, Applications, More, and Show search tools.

The search results are as follows:

- Web**: [Track Android Phone | Phone Guard Security App](https://pgsapp.com/tag/track-android-phone/)
<https://pgsapp.com/tag/track-android-phone/>
 Report spam
 Block pgsapp.com
- News**: [Phone Guard Security App - Track and Find Lost and Stolen Phones ...](https://pgsapp.com/)
<https://pgsapp.com/>
 Report spam
 Block pgsapp.com
- Applications**: [Phone Guard Security App - Track and Find Lost and Stolen Phones and Tablets ...](#)
 It works much better than Where Is My **Phone**, Where Is My **Droid**, etc.
- Web**: [Track Lost Android | Phone Guard Security App](https://pgsapp.com/tag/track-lost-android/)
<https://pgsapp.com/tag/track-lost-android/>
 Report spam
 Block pgsapp.com
- News**: [Phone Guard Security App is Launched to Help You Safeguard Your ...](https://pgsapp.com/mobile-spy-android-apps/)
<https://pgsapp.com/mobile-spy-android-apps/>
 Report spam
 Block pgsapp.com
- Web**: [Track Android App | Phone Guard Security App](https://pgsapp.com/tag/track-android-app/)
<https://pgsapp.com/tag/track-android-app/>
 Report spam
 Block pgsapp.com
- News**: [FAQ – Q&A – Q: How to Uninstall The App? | Phone Guard Security ...](https://pgsapp.com/faq-qa-q-how-to-uninstall-the-app/)
<https://pgsapp.com/faq-qa-q-how-to-uninstall-the-app/>
 Report spam
 Block pgsapp.com

The results for this keyword have changed now since this particular result set was brought to the attention of Google. With that being said, it's not unusual at all to have reports like the one above come in for other searches too. It's been happening for several weeks, with reports stronger since Google's Penguin Update.

Google recently said that it's been working on changes to both sitelinks and site clustering (how it groups pages from the same site). Both alterations may be connected to this but we're keeping an eye on Google to learn more.

2

Google's Matt Cutts Clarifies his statement that "The Next Penguin Update Will Be Big"

At SES San Francisco last month, during the Matt Cutts keynote, Matt answered some questions about the Penguin update that has been knocking sites out of the rankings right and left.

Update from Matt Cutts: Matt clarified and gave a lot of context to what he said at SES SF. Here is his comment:

Hey Barry, I wasn't saying that people needed to overly stress out about the next Penguin update, but I'm happy to give more details. I was giving context on the fact that lots of people were asking me when the next Penguin update would happen, as if they expected Penguin updates to happen on a monthly basis and as if Penguin would only involve data refreshes.

If you remember, in the early days of Panda, it took several months for us to iterate on the algorithm, and the Panda impact tended to be somewhat larger (e.g. the April 2011 update incorporated new signals like sites that users block). Later on, the Panda updates had less impact over time as we stabilized the signals/algorithm and Panda moved closer to near-monthly updates. Likewise, we're still in the early stages of Penguin where the engineers are incorporating new signals and iterating to improve the algorithm. Because of that, expect that the next few Penguin updates will take longer, incorporate additional signals, and as a result will have more noticeable impact. It's not the case that people should just expect data refreshes for Penguin quite yet.

Anyways, we will keep an eye on Google and make your website future-proof against all these search engine updates.

3

Google Rolls Out “The Pirate Update” aka The DMCA Update

Google announced another big change to their algorithm on August 10th. This change targets sites that have numerous copyright infringement complaints against them. According to the announcement released within Google's Blog...

"Starting next week, we will begin taking into account a new signal in our rankings: the number of valid copyright removal notices we receive for any given site. Sites with high numbers of removal notices may appear lower in our results. This ranking change should help users find legitimate, quality sources of content more easily whether it's a song previewed on NPR's music website, a TV show on Hulu or new music streamed from Spotify."

As it turns out, there is a way that Google can guesstimate if there's copyright infringement happening, by making use of Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) “takedown” requests.

These requests are one of the ways to get content removed from Google. Anyone can file a request. It's not proof of copyright infringement. It's merely an allegation, and one that can be challenged. But Google evaluates each request, and if deemed valid, content is removed.

If you want a sense of what sites are likely to be hit, Google told us this page at its Google Transparency Report site showing domains with the most requests against them is a starting place:


Specified Domains ⓘ

Past Week Past Month Past Year All Available

Specified Domain	Copyright Owners	Reporting Organizations	URLs	% ⓘ
filestube.com	1,190	461	1,040,359	< 1%
torrenthound.com	582	211	457,235	< 5%
extratorrent.com	588	197	338,635	< 1%
bitsnoop.com	754	314	319,146	< 1%
isohunt.com	851	306	311,743	< 1%
torrentz.eu	903	398	289,484	< 1%
kat.ph	815	262	280,348	< 1%
4shared.com	471	158	270,755	< 0.1%
downloads.nl	248	29	268,825	< 1%
filetram.com	709	225	215,202	< 1%
filesonicsearch.com	473	126	214,252	< 1%
zippyshare.com	476	103	212,855	< 1%
thepiratebay.se	599	210	209,993	< 1%
dilandau.eu	176	22	205,895	< 1%
beemp3.com	356	58	204,185	< 1%
mp3searchy.com	255	37	179,361	< 1%
fenopy.eu	464	167	177,226	< 1%
torrentcrazy.com	622	232	172,634	< 1%
mp3skull.com	324	54	168,493	< 1%
sumotorrent.com	475	168	163,390	< 1%

However, Google clarified that just because a site is on that page doesn't mean it will be hit with a penalty. It's just a general guide, said Google, to what it means when it talks about sites getting a lot of notices.

As many on the Web have brought to light, YouTube (among many other large sites) is missing from this list. YouTube, for example, has been named in countless copyright issues over the years and it's safe to assume that they will remain untouched by this update. Google has even excluded them from their above reports with this disclaimer:

What's included? What's not included? 

The data below consists of the copyright removal requests we've received through our [web form](#) for **Google Search**. It is a partial historical record that includes more than **95%** of the copyright removal requests that we have received for Google Search since **July 2011**.

- Requests for products other than Google Search (e.g, requests directed at **YouTube** or **Blogger**) are **not included**.
- Requests submitted by means other than our web form, such as **fax** or **written letter** are **not included**.

For more about this data, see our [FAQ](#).

If you want to learn more about DMCA check out the FAQs on ChillingEffects.org, the site Google pushes users directly to for more info.

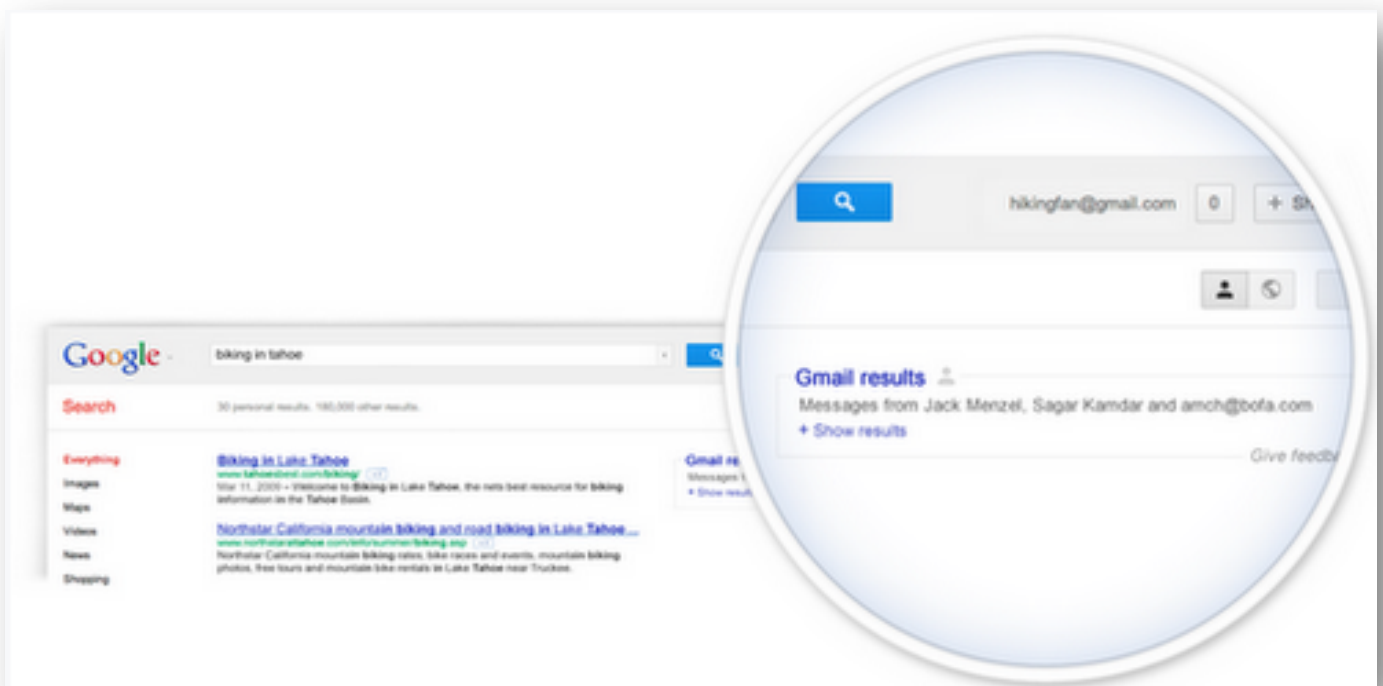
4

Google Now Puts Your E-mail Into The Search Results Too!

On August 8th, Google announced that they're dedicated to building the Search Engine of the Future! So, in the name of progress:

"Starting today, we're opening up a limited trial where you can sign up to get information from your Gmail right from the search box."

The idea is for you to do a search on Google and if your keywords are included in any of your Gmail messages or contacts they'll be displayed on the right hand side of the search results.



There is no official release date on this as we aren't sure that it will make it past this limited trial. As of the time of this publishing, Google was still taking volunteers for testing. However, it's limited to Google.com in English and @gmail.com addresses only, which means it's not available for Google Apps accounts. So, if you're interested in having Google serve up everything they can find containing your keywords including your email then now is the time to check it out.

It comes as no surprise that some think of this as a new privacy violation. However, if you're already signed into your Google account then your Gmail is one click away from being shown. So, those worried about security need to realize that nothing new is being made available. Matt Cutts also took the time to assure concerned users that you will be able to easily turn it off - if this feature does make it to mainstream.

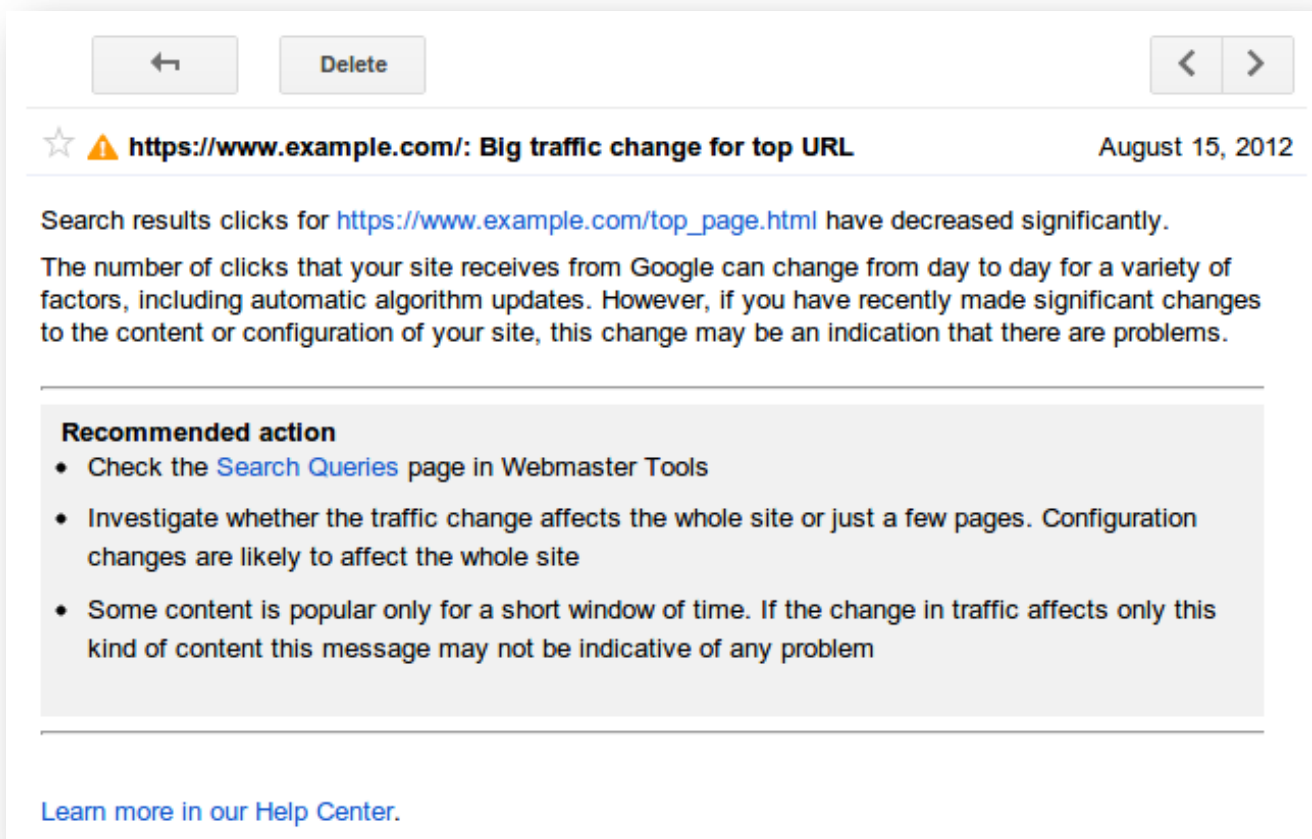
"...They demonstrated that the same one-click toggle to disable personalized results will also disable the results from Gmail. It's not in our enlightened self-interest to push information that's unhelpful or jarring, because then you're less likely to search on Google in the future."

5

Google Webmaster Tools Adds Traffic Change Notices and Structured Data Dashboard

As we've noted over the past few months Google seems pretty excited about sending out alerts these days with the announcement of the 'Crawl Error' alert in July and the dreaded unnatural links notice received by so many. Their enthusiasm hasn't waned as they've added a 'Search Query Alert' to the list of notices you may receive within your Webmaster Tools account if your site experiences a significant drop or increase in site visits and impressions.

If your site has consistent traffic and you receive a notice make sure technical problems are not to blame. If you don't check your Webmasters Tools account regularly then make sure that email forwarding is in place so any notices from Google are more likely to be seen. Google released an example shot of the Search Query Alert notice shown below.



The screenshot shows a notification email from Google Webmaster Tools. At the top, there are navigation buttons: a back arrow, a 'Delete' button, and left/right arrow buttons. Below these is a star icon, a warning triangle icon, and the subject line: "https://www.example.com/: Big traffic change for top URL" with the date "August 15, 2012" on the right. The main body of the email contains the following text:

Search results clicks for https://www.example.com/top_page.html have decreased significantly.

The number of clicks that your site receives from Google can change from day to day for a variety of factors, including automatic algorithm updates. However, if you have recently made significant changes to the content or configuration of your site, this change may be an indication that there are problems.

Recommended action

- Check the [Search Queries](#) page in Webmaster Tools
- Investigate whether the traffic change affects the whole site or just a few pages. Configuration changes are likely to affect the whole site
- Some content is popular only for a short window of time. If the change in traffic affects only this kind of content this message may not be indicative of any problem

[Learn more in our Help Center.](#)

You can read their official announcement and want to help them determine the parameters of when a notice is sent then you can give your feedback in the help forums.

Structured Data Dashboard Added to Webmaster Tools

Google has added a new Structured Data Dashboard to Webmaster Tools making it SO much easier to keep track of your changes.

The dashboard is located under the Optimization section and has three views available to you:

- Site-level view
- Item type-level view
- Page-level view

Structured data is necessary if you want to continue to grow online. Google is spot lighting it more and more all the time and if you had any doubts before this the fact that Google just released this Structured Data tool quickly changes it from our opinion to a reality.

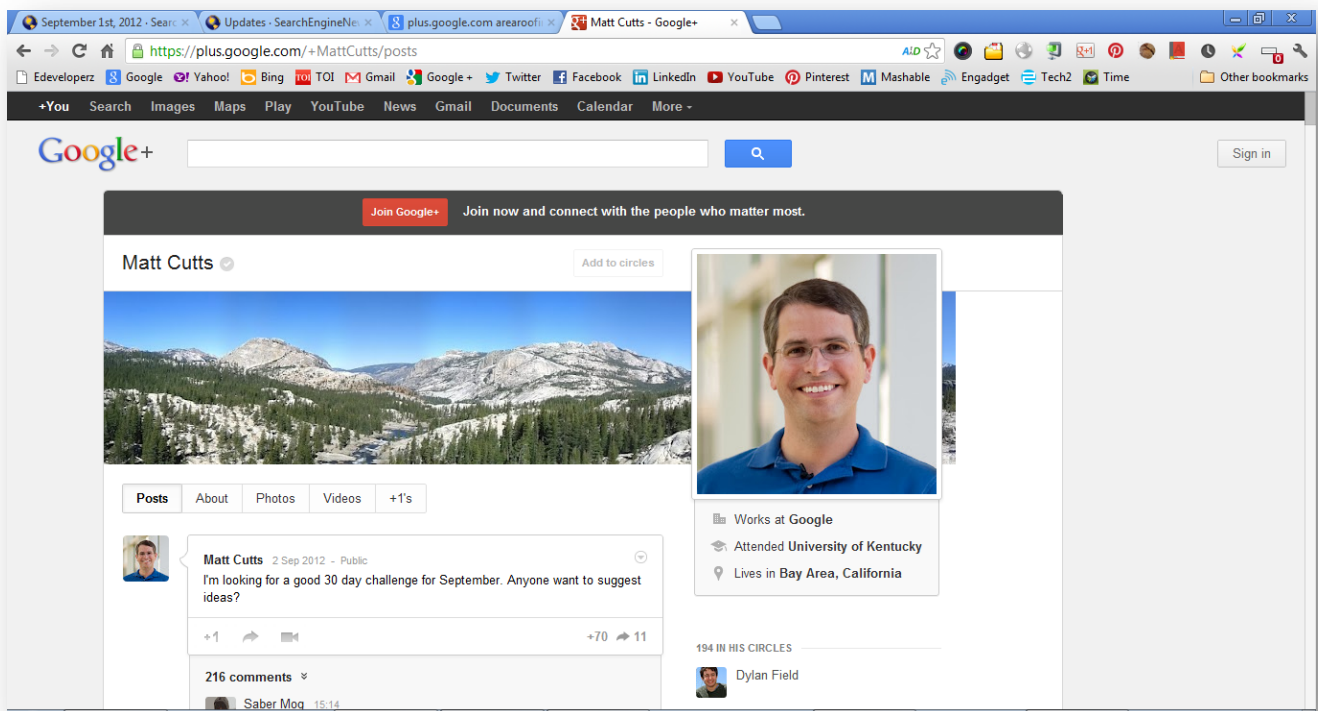
6

Google+ Vanity URLs are Provided to Big Brands and Celebrities

In an August 13th post, Google+ announced the much-needed release of vanity URLs for some Google+ users. As you know, G+ profile URLs are impossible to remember.

For example here's the G+ profile link for a local Roofing company, <https://plus.google.com/114495674827579462543/>. Yes, you are right! That's pretty much the most confusing URL possible.

The new URL setup will display the user's name and a '+' sign directly behind the plus.google.com domain. For example, this screenshot of Matt Cutts shows that he's registered the +MattCutts address, which changes the Google+ URL to plus.google.com/+MattCutts



Here's the official G+ post.

"Today we're introducing custom URLs to make it even easier for people to find your profile on Google+. A custom URL is a short, easy to remember web address that links directly to your profile or page on Google+. For instance, +TOYOTA can now use google.com/+toyota to unveil their latest models, +Britney Spears can share her upcoming appearances at google.com/+britneyspears, +Ubisoft can share game trailers and videos at google.com/+assassinscreed, and +Delta can help travelers find great deals at google.com/+delta."

Doug Dvorak

847-997-3454

SEO Solutions

doug@dougdvorak.com

50 South Greeley - #413

<http://www.seosolutions.us>

Palatine, IL 60067





Doug Dvorak

SEO Solutions

50 South Greeley - #413

Palatine, IL 60067

847-997-3454

doug@dougdvorak.com

<http://www.seosolutions.us>