Google Search Console

The Definitive Guide

BACKLINKO

BACKLINKO.COM

This guide has everything you need to know about the Google Search Console.

If you're new to SEO, I'll show you how to get started with the GSC.

And if you're an SEO pro? I'll reveal advanced tips, tactics and strategies that you can use to get higher rankings.

Bottom line:

If you want to get the most out of the new Search Console, you'll love this guide.

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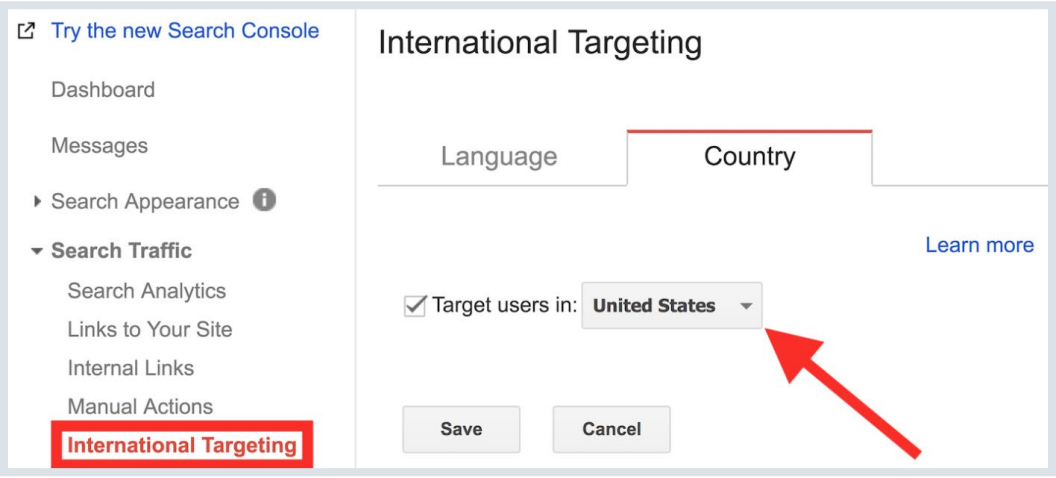
Chapter 1

Getting Started With the Google Search Console

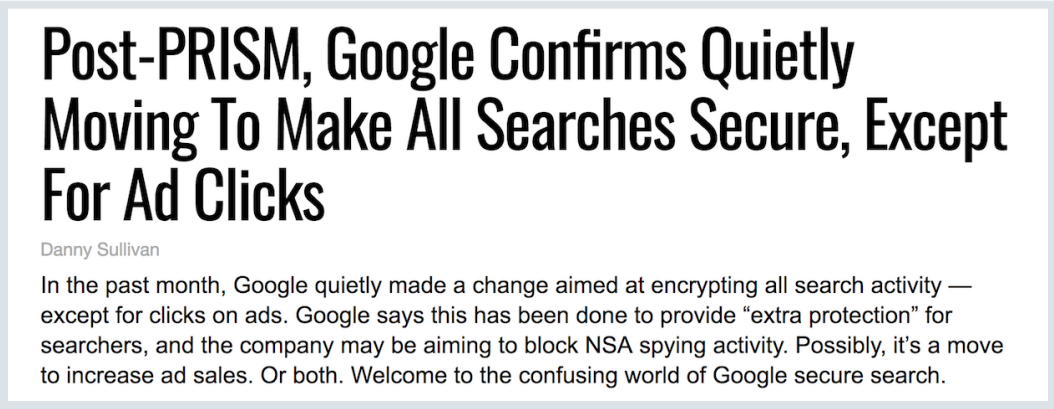
#4: Select your target country from the drop-down box



And you're all set.

Step #4: Link Google Analytics With Search Console

Back in 2013, Google switched all searches over to HTTPS.



Post-PRISM, Google Confirms Quietly Moving To Make All Searches Secure, Except For Ad Clicks

Danny Sullivan

In the past month, Google quietly made a change aimed at encrypting all search activity — except for clicks on ads. Google says this has been done to provide "extra protection" for searchers, and the company may be aiming to block NSA spying activity. Possibly, it's a move to increase ad sales. Or both. Welcome to the confusing world of Google secure search.

This was great for security. But it was a bummer for website owners.

Suddenly, priceless keyword data vanished from Google Analytics.

Instead, all we got was this:

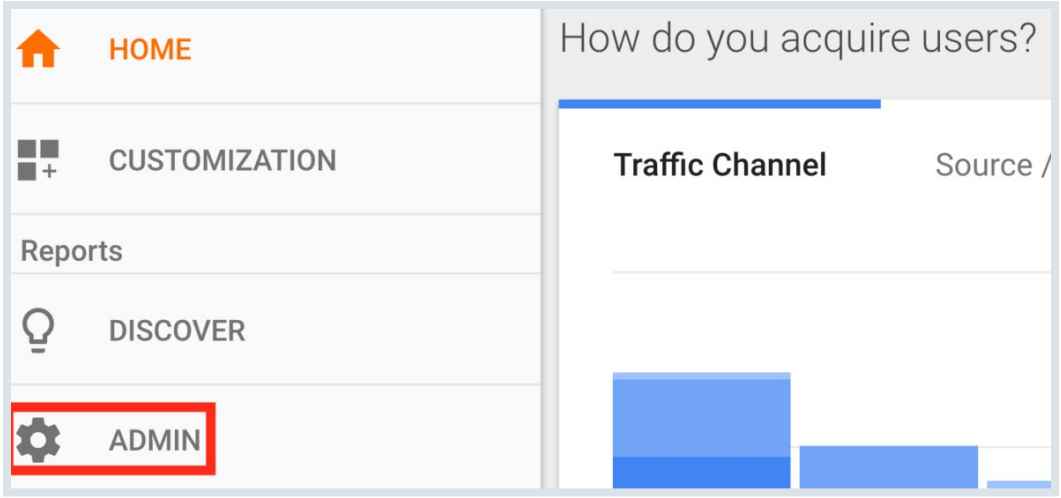
	Keyword	Acquisition	
		Users	
		198 % of Total: 89.19% (222)	
	1. (not provided)	197 (99.49%)	

The good news? There's a simple way to get some of that keyword data back:

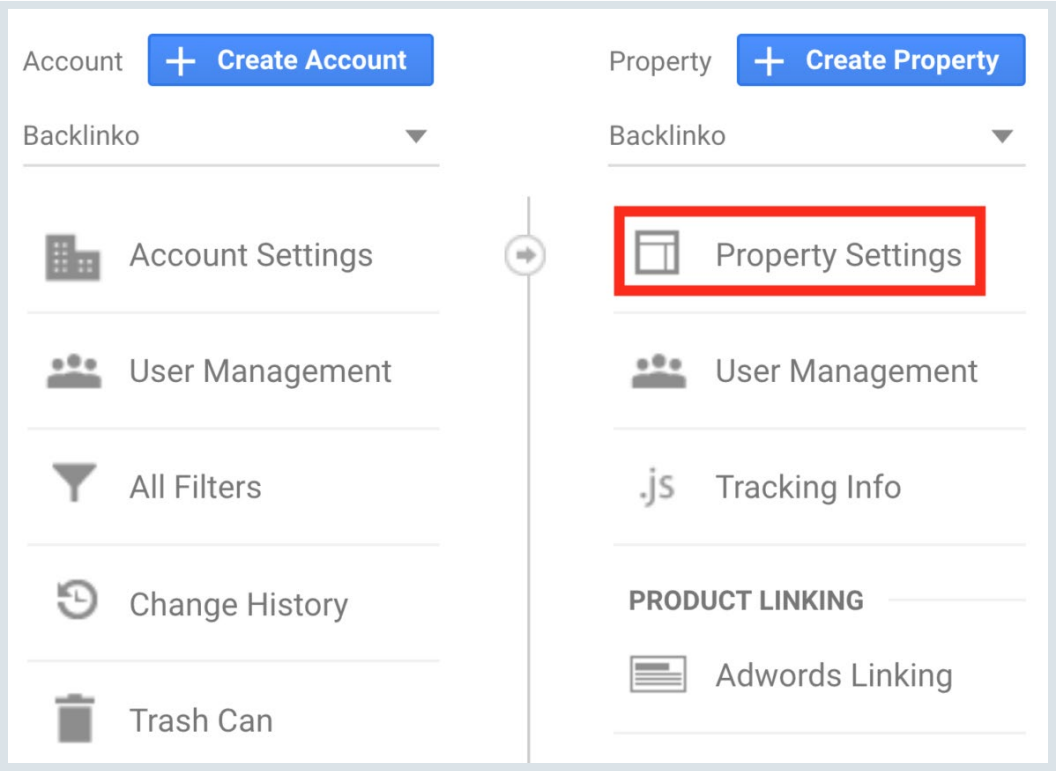
Link Google Analytics with your Google Search Console account.

Here's how:

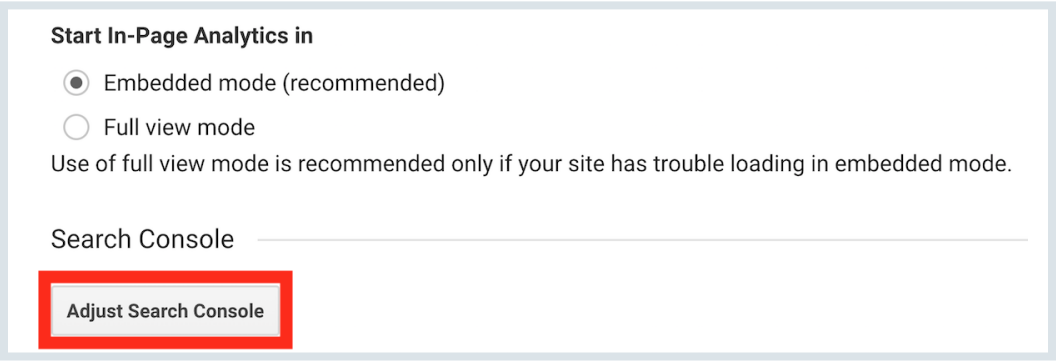
Open up your Google Analytics. Then, click the "Admin" button at the bottom of the left menu.



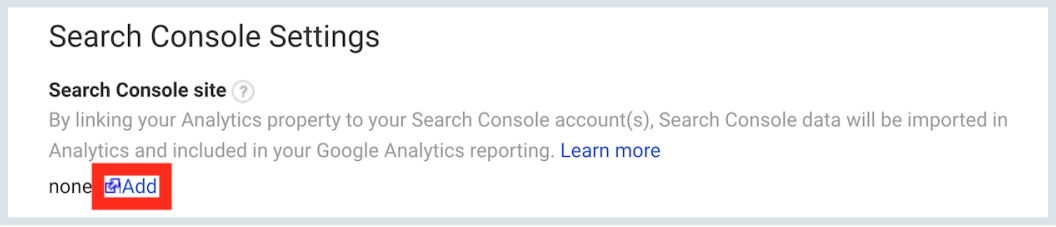
Click on the “Property Settings” link.



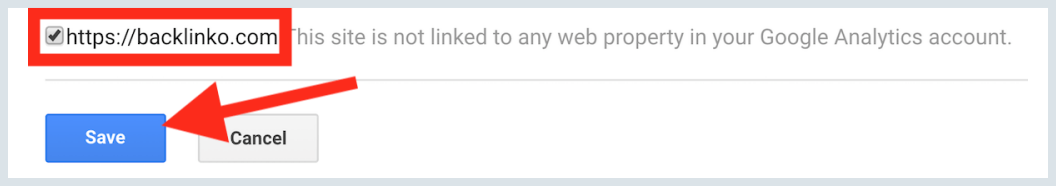
Scroll down until you see the “Adjust Search Console” button. Click it!



Click on “Add”.



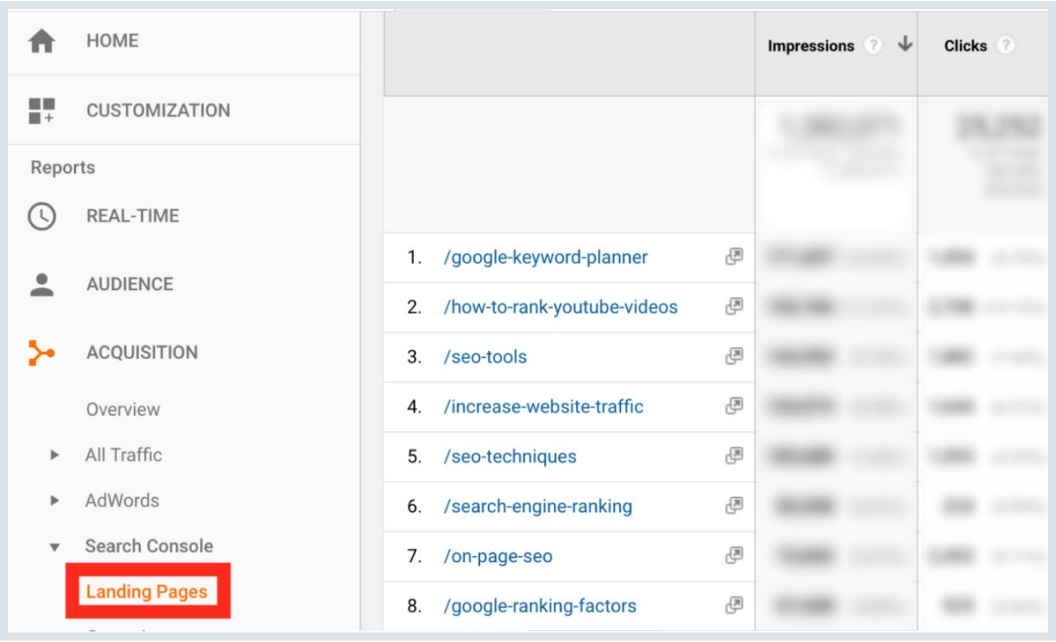
Scroll down until you find your website, check the box, and hit “Save”.



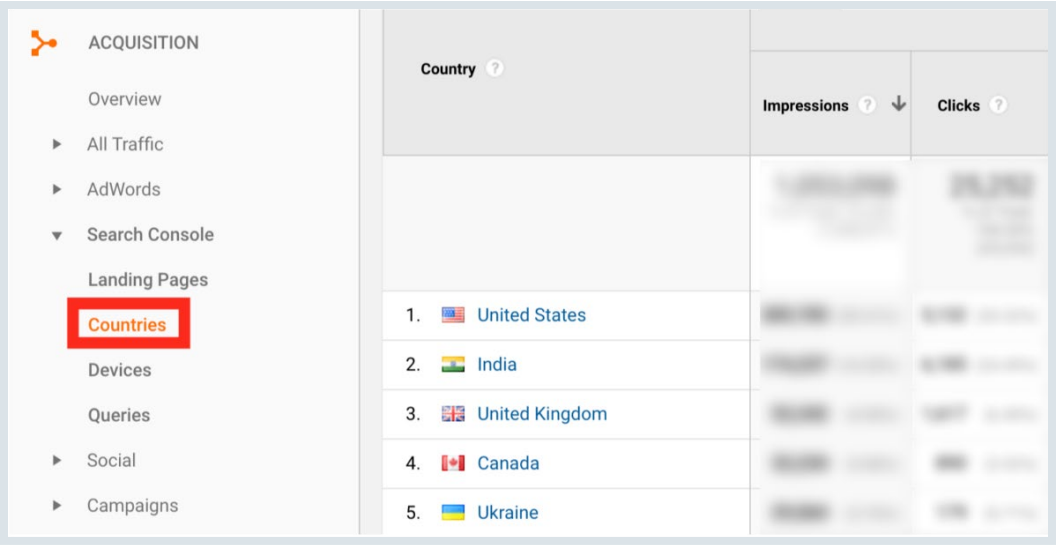
You're done! Analytics and Search Console are now linked.

Let's see what you get...

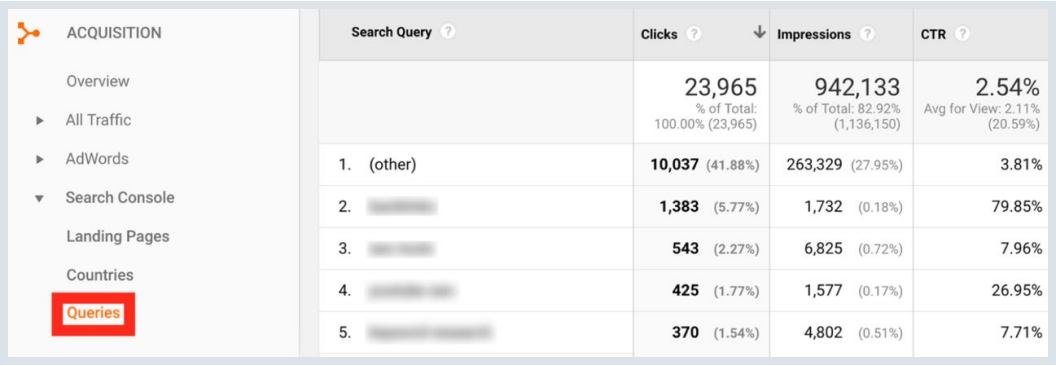
Landing pages with impression and click data:



Impression, click, CTR, and position data by country:



But most importantly... keyword data:



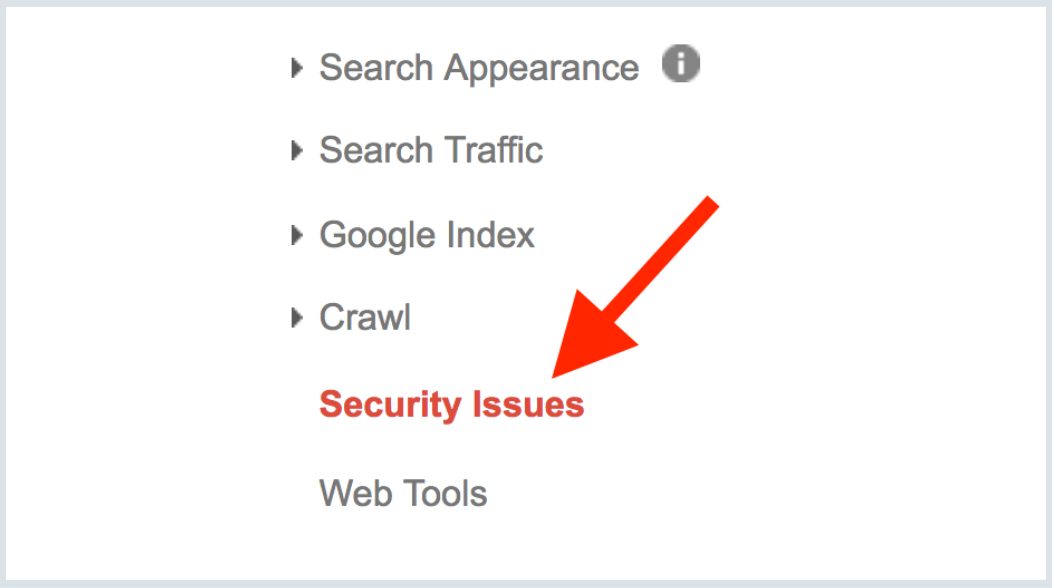
Boom! It's not perfect. Half of the queries are listed as "Other". But if you compare this to what you usually get from Analytics...

...I'm calling that a win.

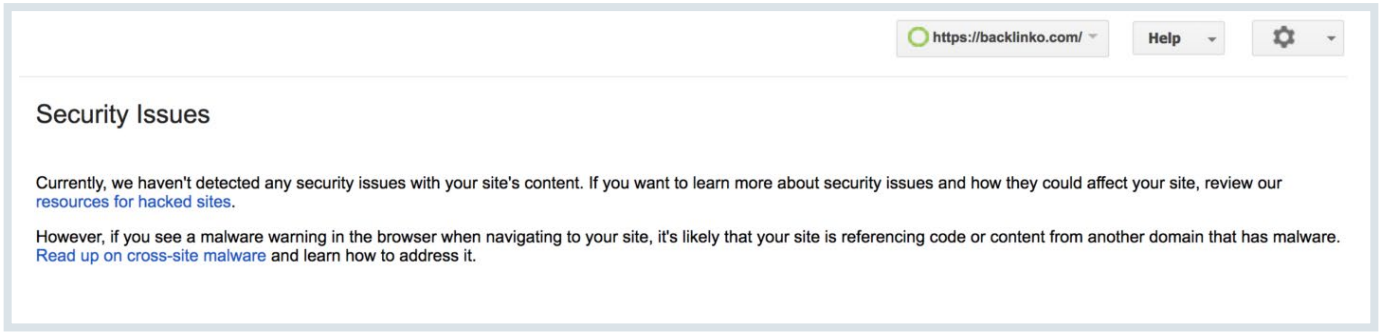
Step #5: Check For Security Issues

Finally, check to see if you have any security issues that might be hurting your site's SEO.

To do that, click "Security Issues".



And see what Google says:



In most cases, as you see here, there aren't any security problems with my site. But it's worth checking.

Step #6: Add a Sitemap

I'll be honest:

If you have a small site, you probably don't NEED to submit a sitemap to Google.

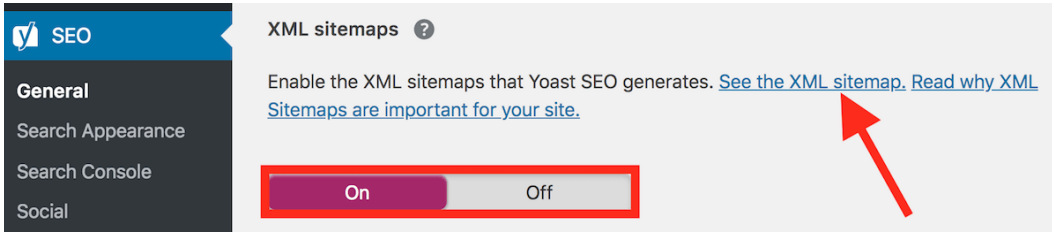
But for bigger sites (like ecommerce sites with thousands of pages) a sitemap is KEY.

That said: I recommend that you go ahead and submit a sitemap either way.

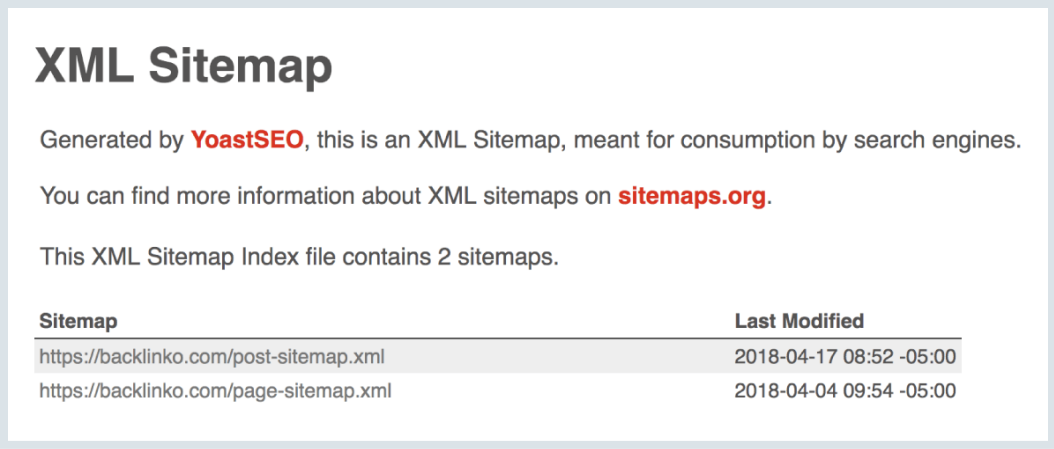
Here's how to do it:

First up, you need to create a sitemap. If you're running WordPress with the Yoast plugin, you should already have one.

If you don't have a sitemap yet, head over to Yoast. Then, set the XML sitemaps setting to "On" (under "General/Features"):



Click the "See the XML Sitemap" link, which will take you to your sitemap:



XML Sitemap

Generated by **YoastSEO**, this is an XML Sitemap, meant for consumption by search engines.

You can find more information about XML sitemaps on **sitemaps.org**.

This XML Sitemap Index file contains 2 sitemaps.

Sitemap	Last Modified
https://backlinko.com/post-sitemap.xml	2018-04-17 08:52 -05:00
https://backlinko.com/page-sitemap.xml	2018-04-04 09:54 -05:00

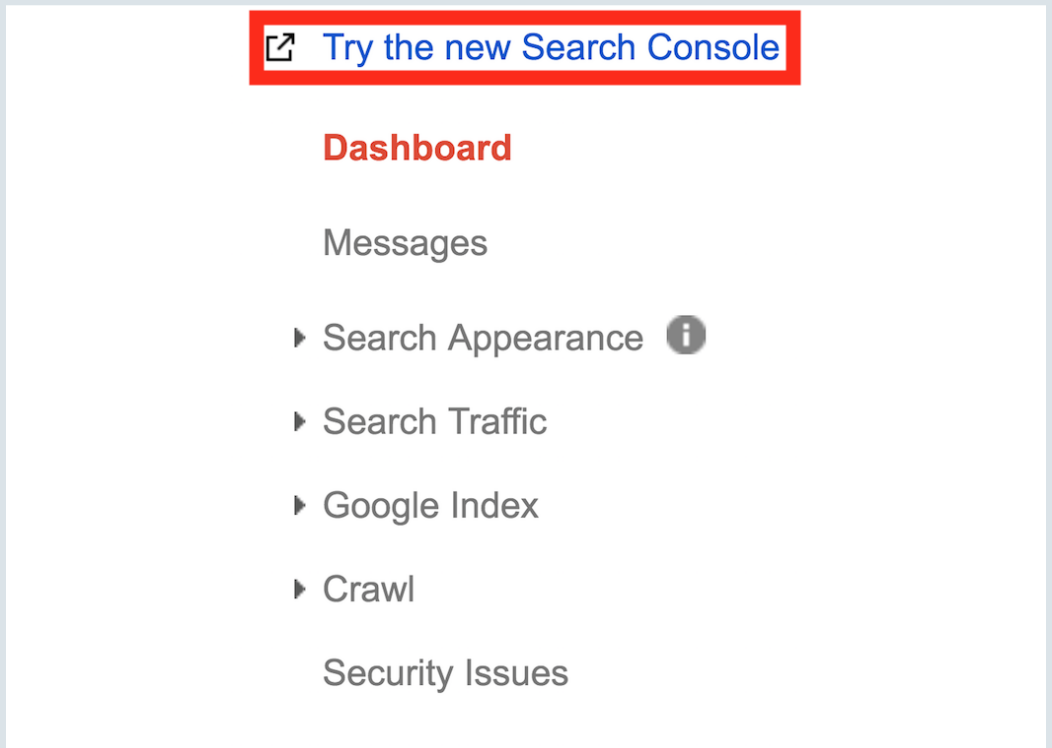
Don't use Yoast? Go to yoursite.com/sitemap.xml. If you have a sitemap, it's usually here. If not, you want to create one.

So let's submit a sitemap to Google. It's SUPER easy to do in the new GSC.

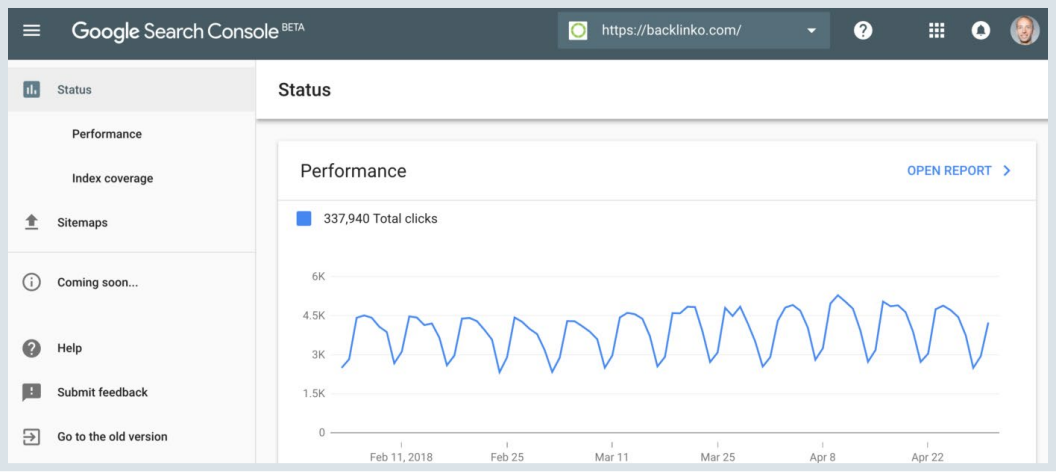
How To Access The NEW Google Search Console

So Google recently launched a new Google Search Console. It doesn't have all the features of the old GSC yet. Until then, we need to use both.

To access the new Search Console, log into your GSC account, then click on "Try the new Search Console".

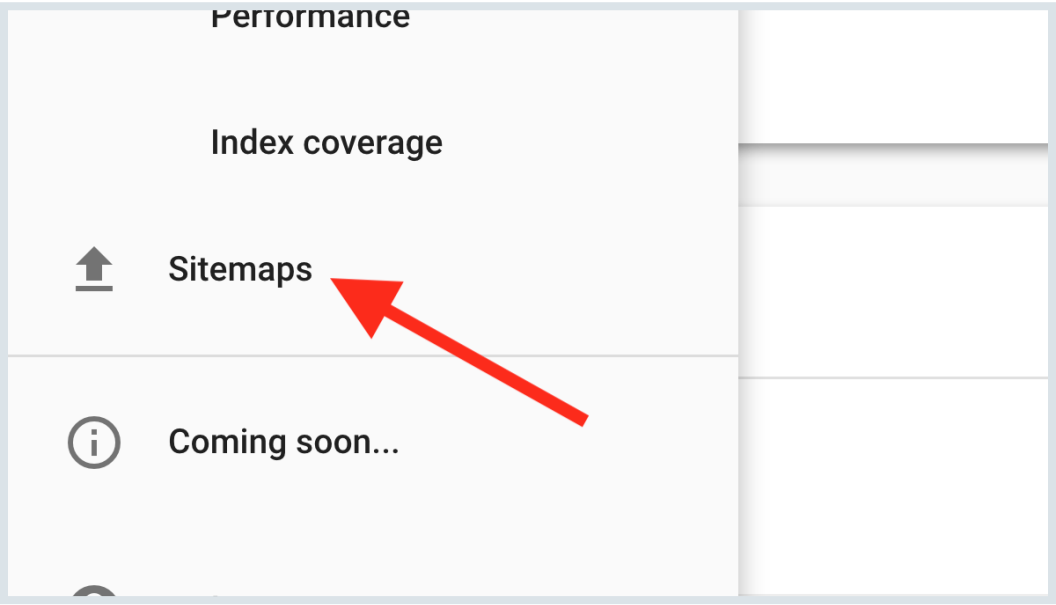


And you'll see the new GSC in all its glory.

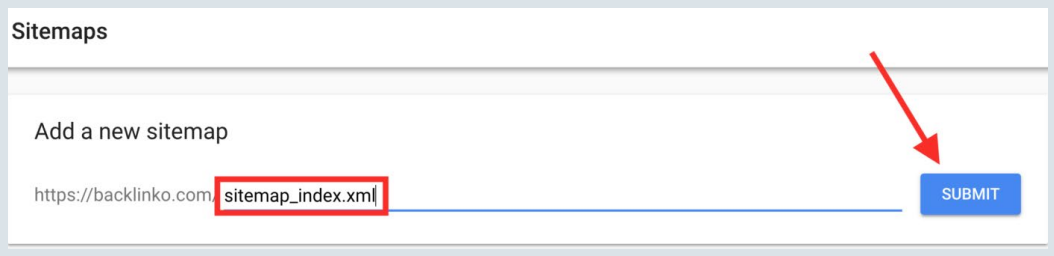


Made it into the new GSC? Good.

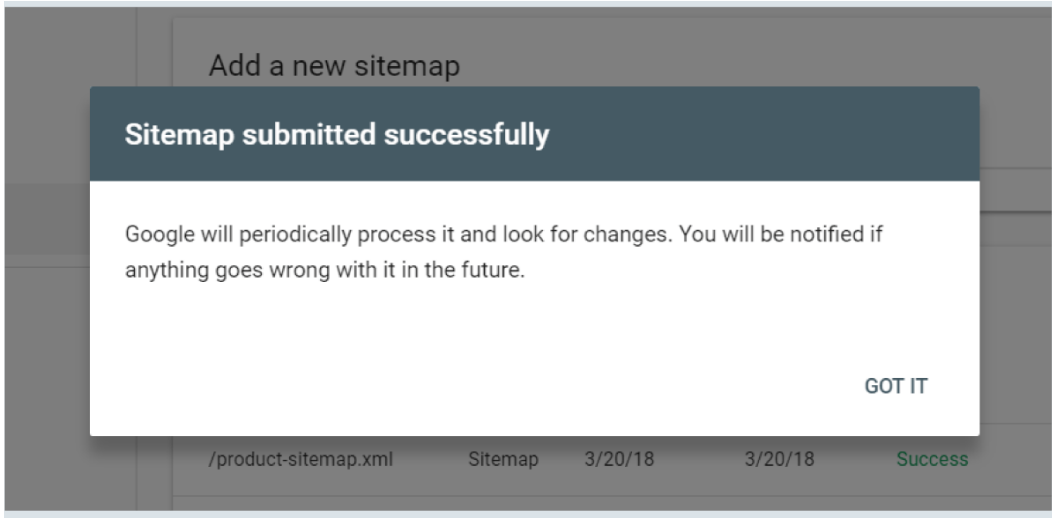
Grab your sitemap URL. Then, hit the "Sitemaps" button.



Paste in your URL and click “Submit”.



And that’s it:



Told you it was easy

Chapter 2

How to Optimize Your Technical SEO With the GSC

In this chapter I'll share the tactics I use to SLAM DUNK my technical SEO.

As you know, when you fix these technical SEO problems, you'll usually find yourself with higher rankings and more traffic.

And the Google Search Console has a TON of features to help you easily spot and fix technical SEO issues.

Here's how to use them:

Use The New "Index Coverage" Report To Find (And Fix) Problems With Indexing

If everything on your website is setup right, Google will:

a) Find your page

and

b) Quickly add it to their index

But sometimes, things go wrong.

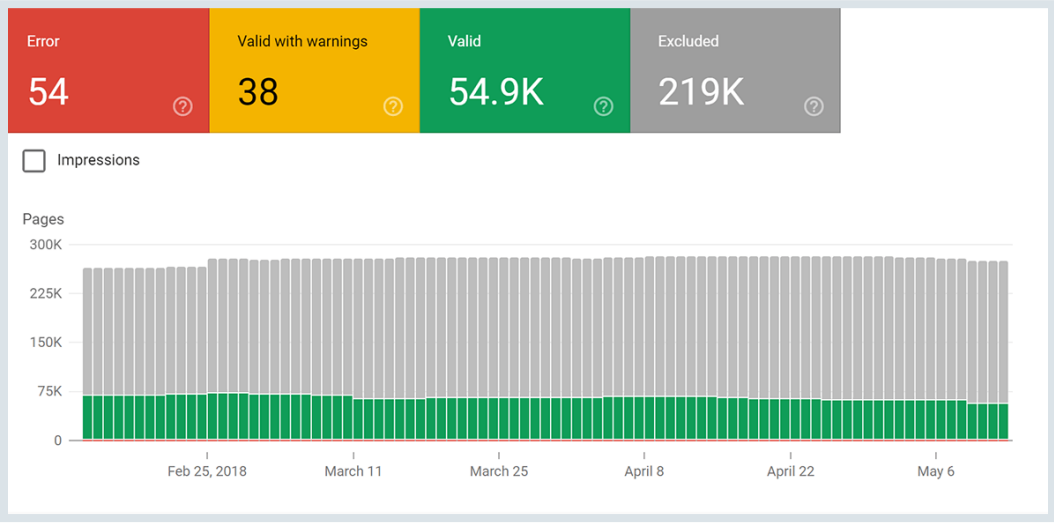
Things you NEED to fix if you want Google to index all of your pages.

And that's where the Index Coverage report comes in.

Let's dive in.

What is the Index Coverage Report?

The Index Coverage report lets you know which pages from your site are in Google's index. It also lets you know about technical issues that prevent pages from getting indexed.



It's part of the new GSC and replaces the "Index Status" report in the old Search Console.

Note: The new Index Coverage report is pretty complicated.

And I could just hand you a list of features and wish you luck.

(In fact, that's what most other "ultimate guides" do).

Instead, I'm going to walk you through an analysis of a REAL site (this one), step-by-step.

That way you can watch me use the Index Coverage Report to uncover problems... and fix them.

How to Find Errors With The Index Coverage Report

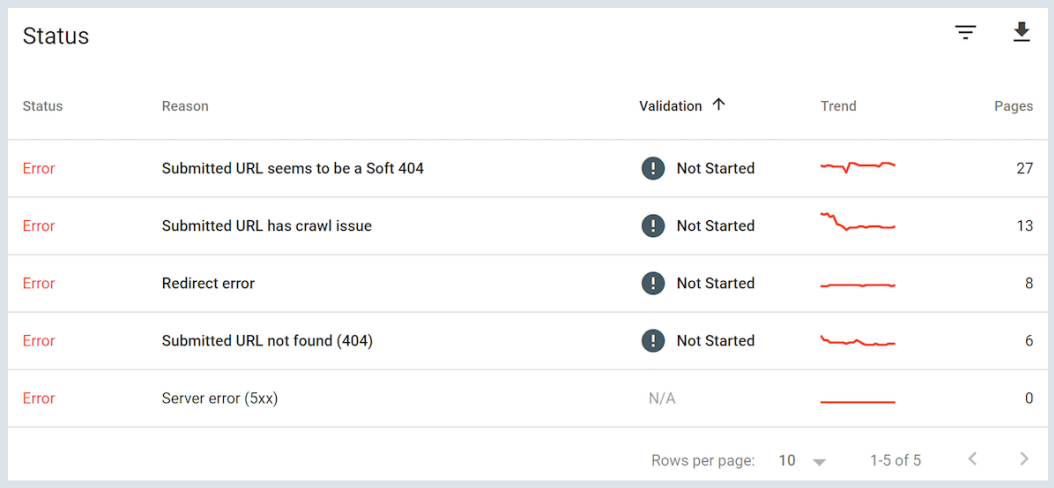
At the top of the Index Coverage report we've got 4 tabs:

1. Error
2. Valid with warnings
3. Valid
4. Excluded

Let's focus on the "error" tab for now.

As you can see, this site has 54 errors. The chart shows how that number has changed over time.

If you scroll down, you get deets on each of these errors:



Status

Status	Reason	Validation	Trend	Pages
Error	Submitted URL seems to be a Soft 404	Not Started		27
Error	Submitted URL has crawl issue	Not Started		13
Error	Redirect error	Not Started		8
Error	Submitted URL not found (404)	Not Started		6
Error	Server error (5xx)	N/A		0

Rows per page: 10 1-5 of 5

There's a lot to take in here.

So to help you make sense of each "reason", here are some quick definitions:

“Submitted URL seems to be a Soft 404”

This means that the page was “not found”, but delivered an incorrect status code in the header. (I’ve found this one to be a little buggy)

“Redirect error”

There’s a redirect for this page (301/302). But it ain’t working.

“Submitted URL not found (404)”

The page wasn’t found and the server returned the correct HTTP status code (404). All good. (Well, if you ignore the fact that the page is broken…)

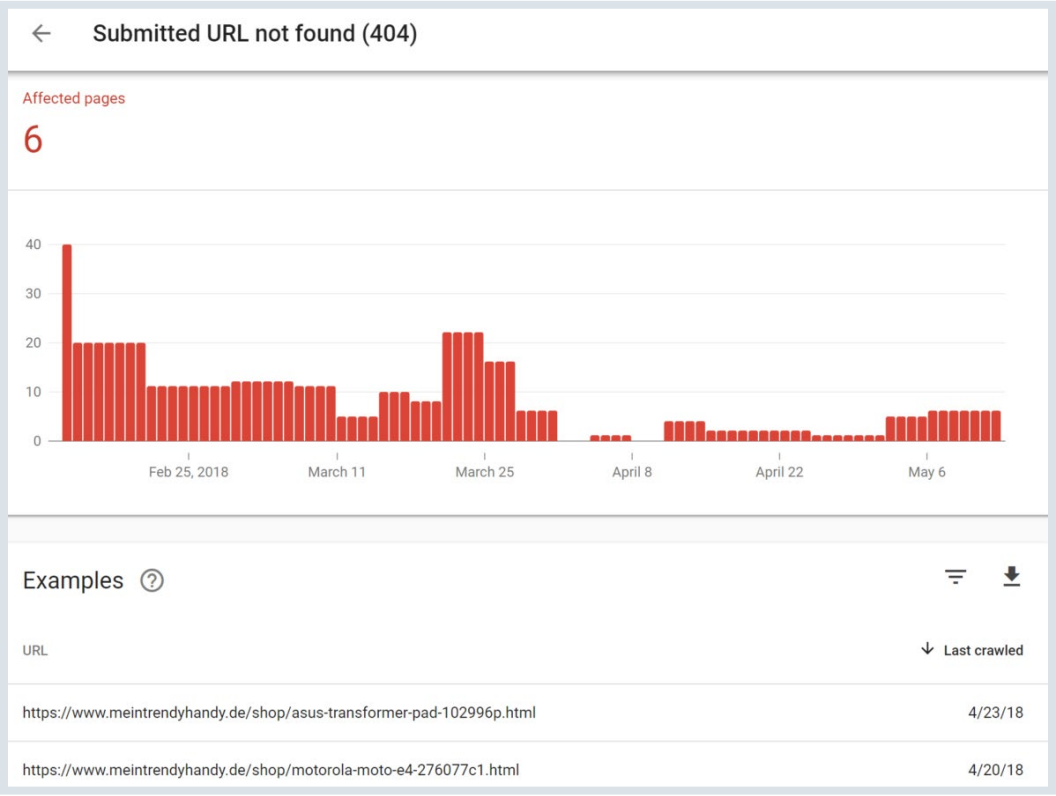
“Submitted URL has crawl issue”

This could be a 100 different things. You’ll have to visit the page to see what’s up.

“Server errors (5xx)”

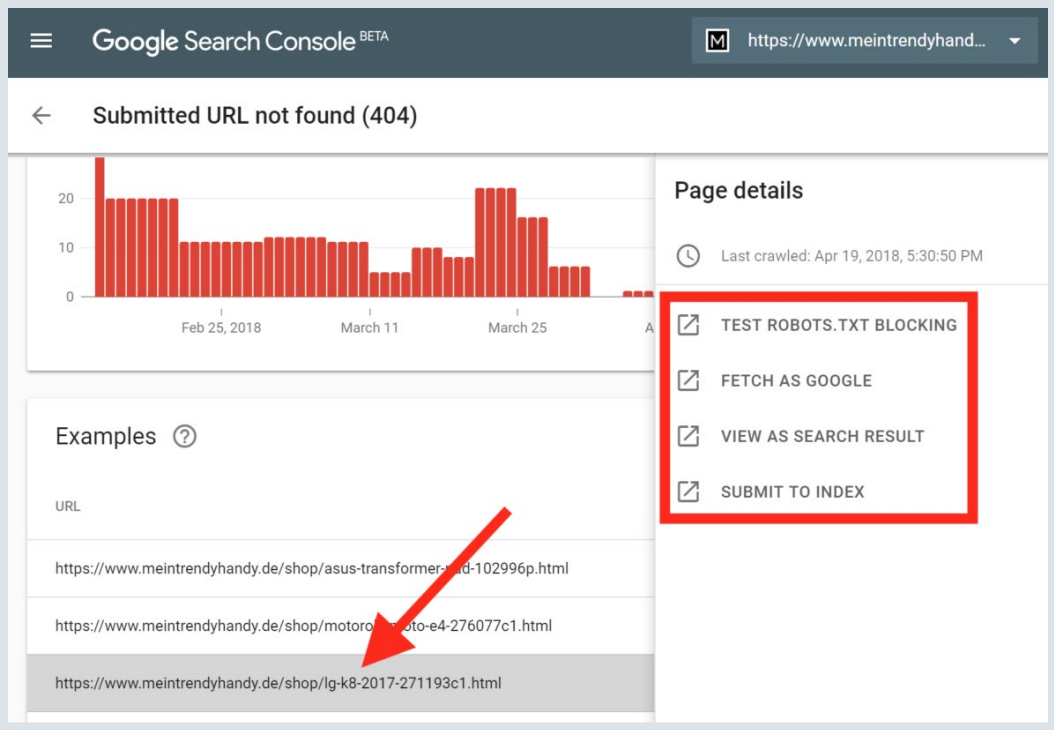
Googlebot couldn’t access the server. It might have crashed, timed out, or been down when Googlebot stopped by.

And when you click on an error status, you get a list of pages with that particular problem.

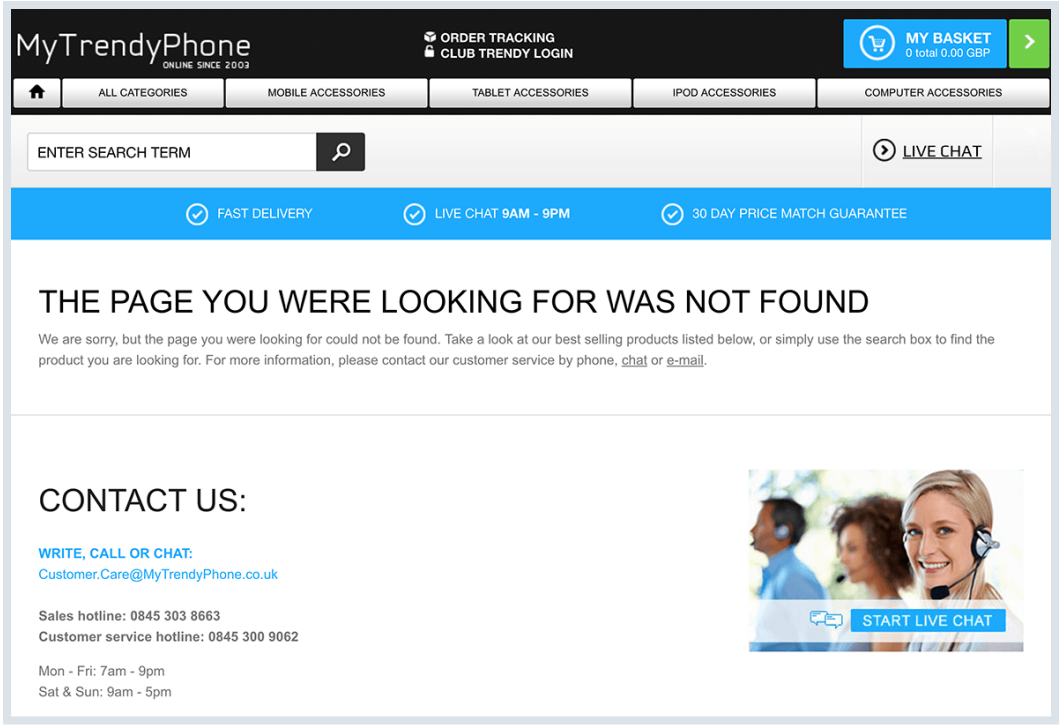


404 errors should be easy to fix. So let's start with those.

Click a URL on the list. This opens up a side panel with 4 options:

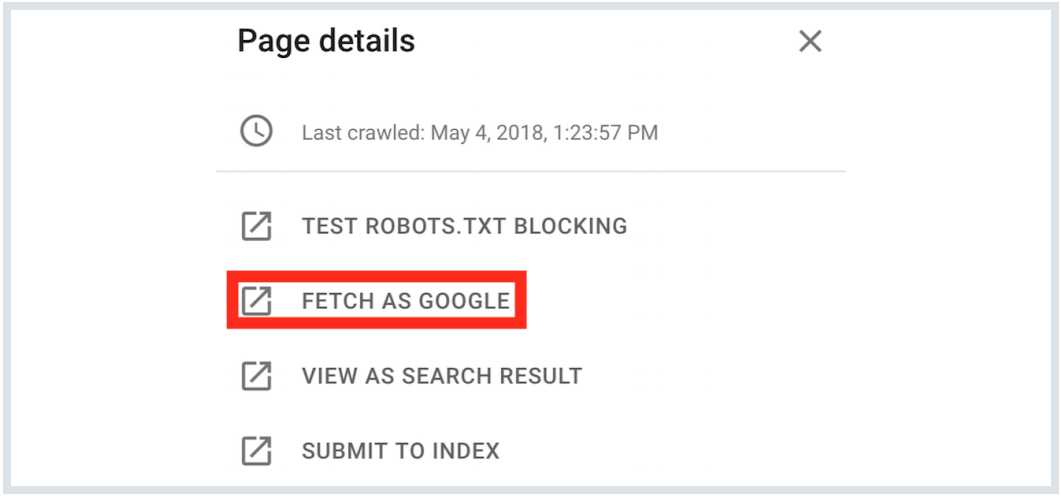


But first, let's visit the URL with a browser. That way, we can double check that the page is really down.

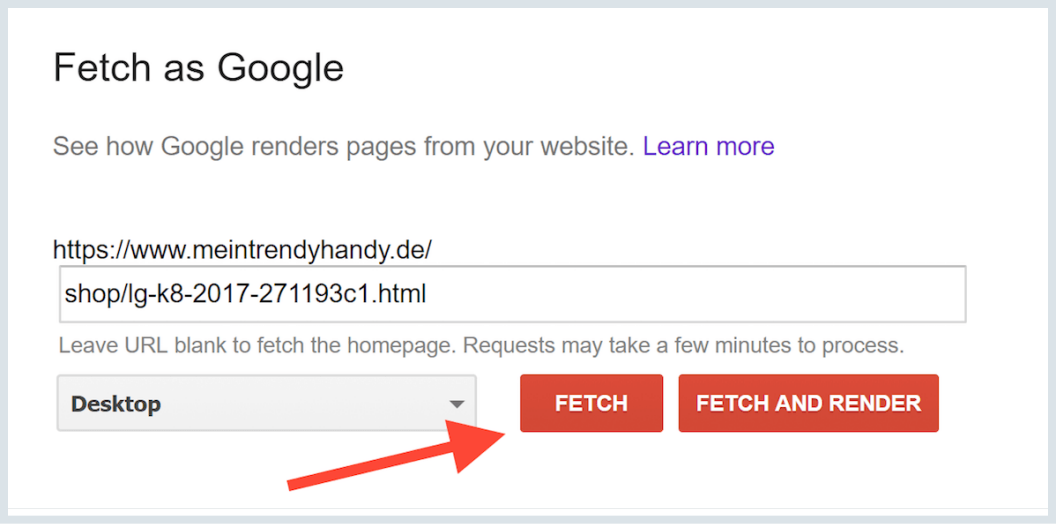


Yup. It's down.

Next, click "Fetch as Google" in the side panel.



Click “Fetch”:



And Googlebot will rush over to your page. Sure enough, this page is still giving me a 404 “Not found” status.

How do we fix it?

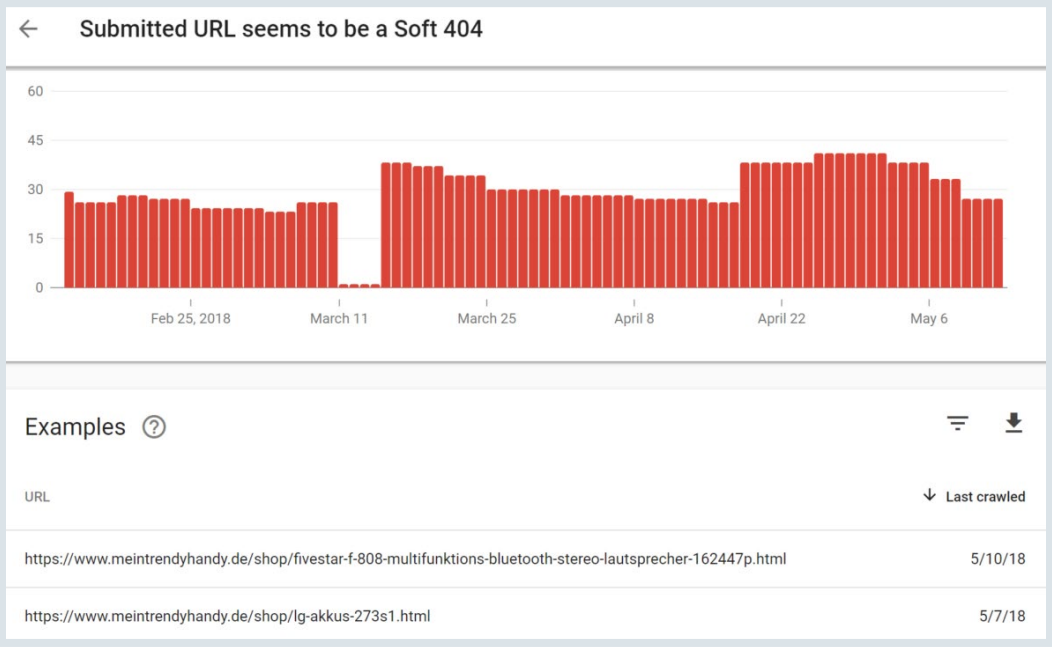
Well, we have two options:

1. Leave it as is. Google will eventually deindex the page. This makes sense if the page is down for a reason (like if you don’t sell that product anymore).
2. You can redirect the 404 page to a similar product page, category page, or blog post.

How to Fix “Soft 404” Errors

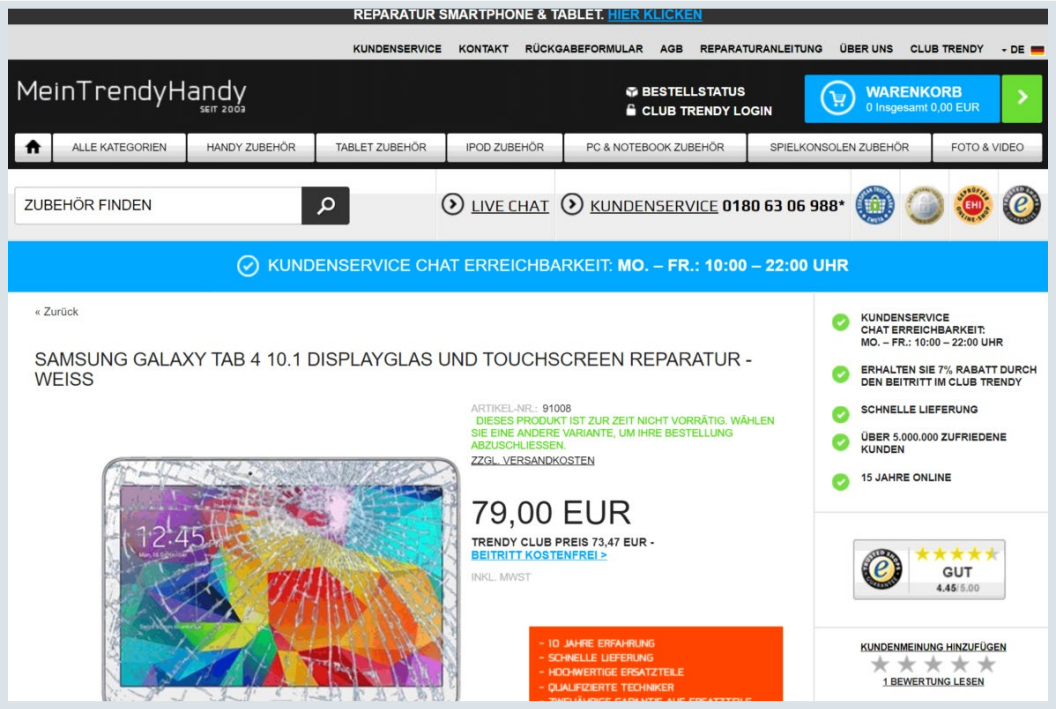
Now it’s time to fix these pesky “Soft 404” errors.

Again, check out the URLs with that error.

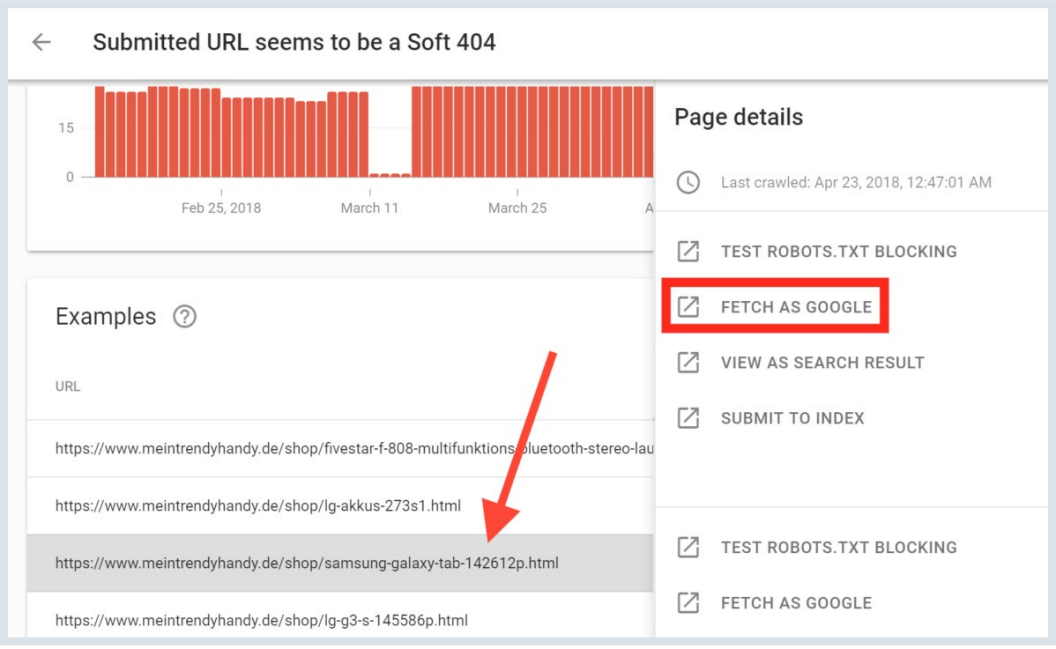


Then, visit each URL in your browser.

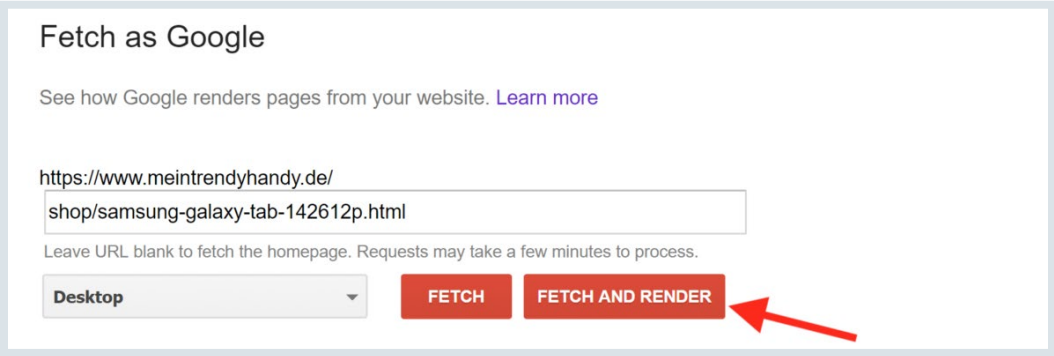
Looks like the first page on the list is loading fine.



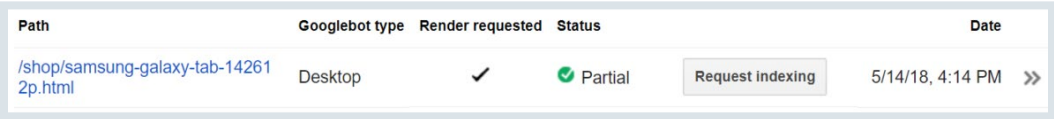
Let's see if Google can access the page OK. Again, we'll use "Fetch as Google".



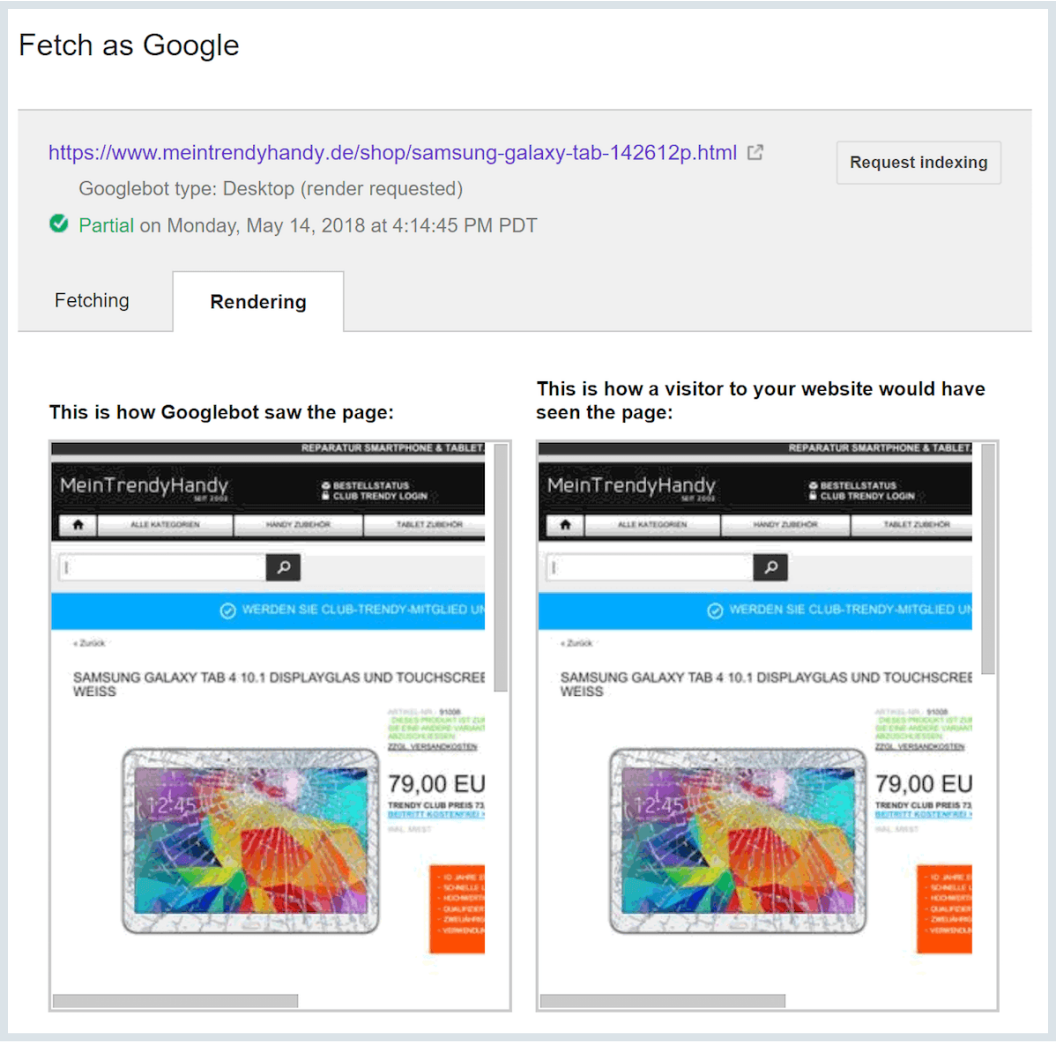
This time we'll choose "Fetch and Render". Fetch and Render sends Googlebot to the page. It also renders the page so you can see your page like Googlebot sees it.



Looks like Google found the page this time.



Now let's see how Google rendered the page.



Looks pretty much the same as how visitors see it. That's good.

Next, scroll down. Google shows you resources that users see.... but Google can't fully see.

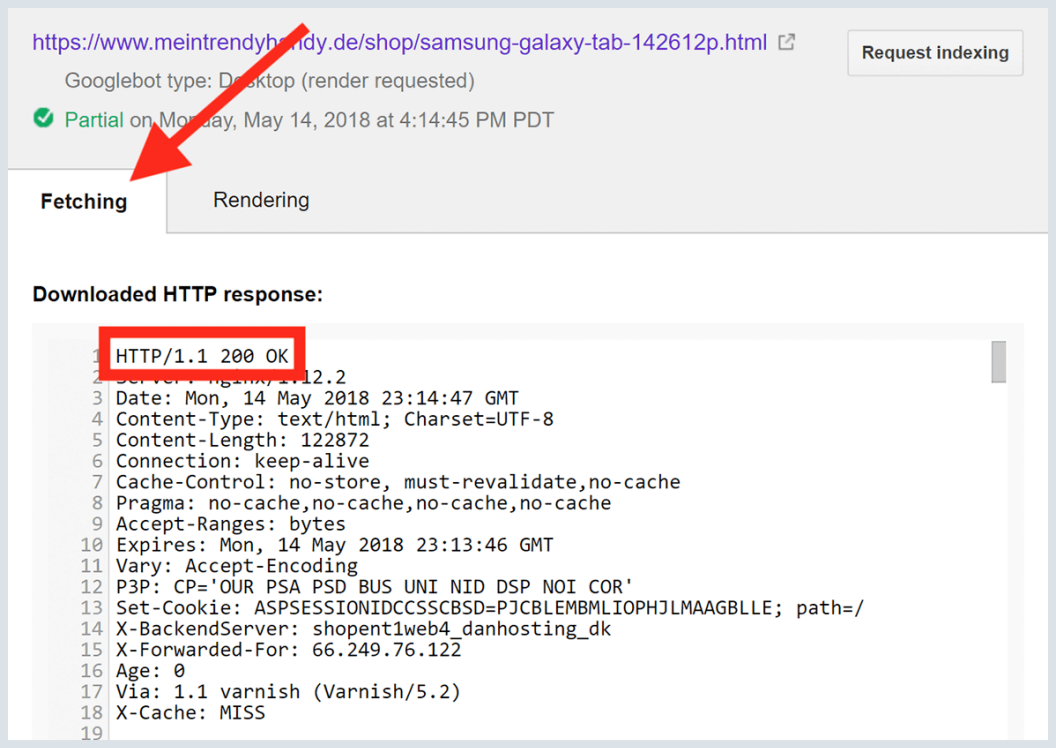
Googlebot couldn't get all resources for this page. Here's a list:

URL	Type	Reason	Severity	
https://static.criteo.net/js/ld/ld.js	Script	Blocked	Low	robots.txt
https://chat2.mtpdev3.com/script.php?id=2be60fb6454ec03cca6d4318f44af340	Script	Blocked	Low	robots.txt
https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/conversion_async.js	Script	Blocked	Low	robots.txt
https://pixel.rubiconproject.com/tap.php?v=32084&nid=2960&put=MzI1NTg1NTY0MjMxNTU0NTgyOA..&expires=30	Image	Blocked	Low	robots.txt
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/pages/ro/360/products/360_animation/91008-VAR/Images/91008-VAR/Lv2/img01.jpg	AJAX	Not found	--	

Sometimes there's a good reason to block certain resources from Googlebot. But sometimes these blocked resources can lead to soft 404 errors.

In this case though, these 5 things are all meant to be blocked. So let's move on...

Finally, click the “Fetching” tab to see the live HTTP status code.



Nice! The 200 status means that the page was found this time and should be indexable.

So we’re good.

The next time Googlebot stops by, the page should get indexed.

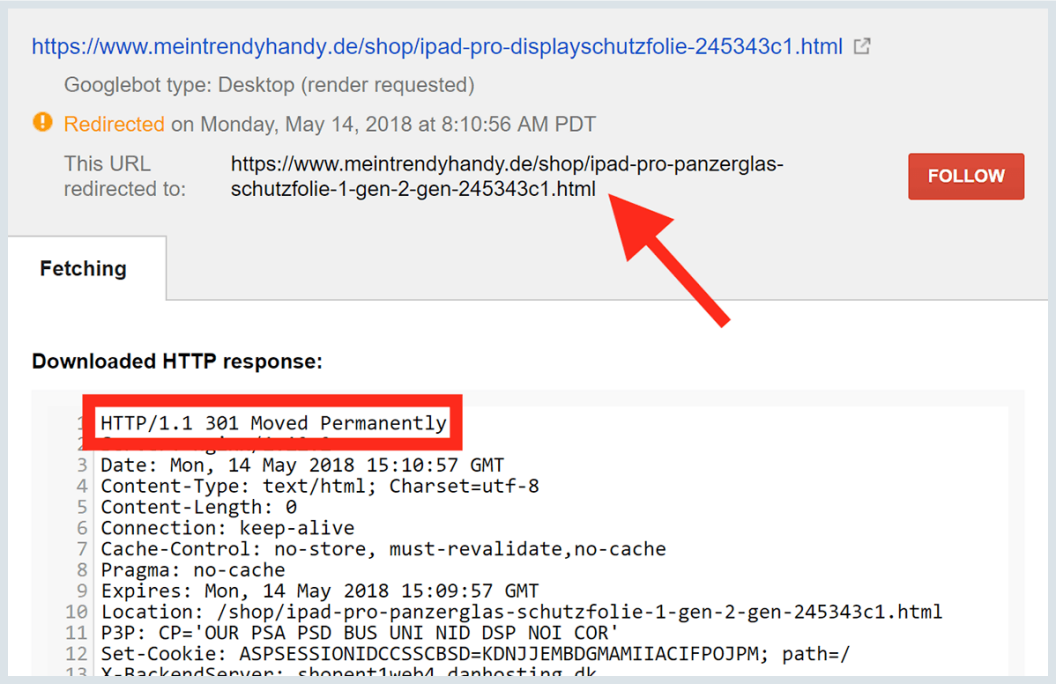
How to Fix Other Errors

You can use the same exact process I just used for “Soft 404s” to fix any error you run into:

1. Load up the page in your browser
2. “Fetch and Render” as Google
3. Read over the specific issues that the GSC tells you about
4. Check the HTTP status of the page

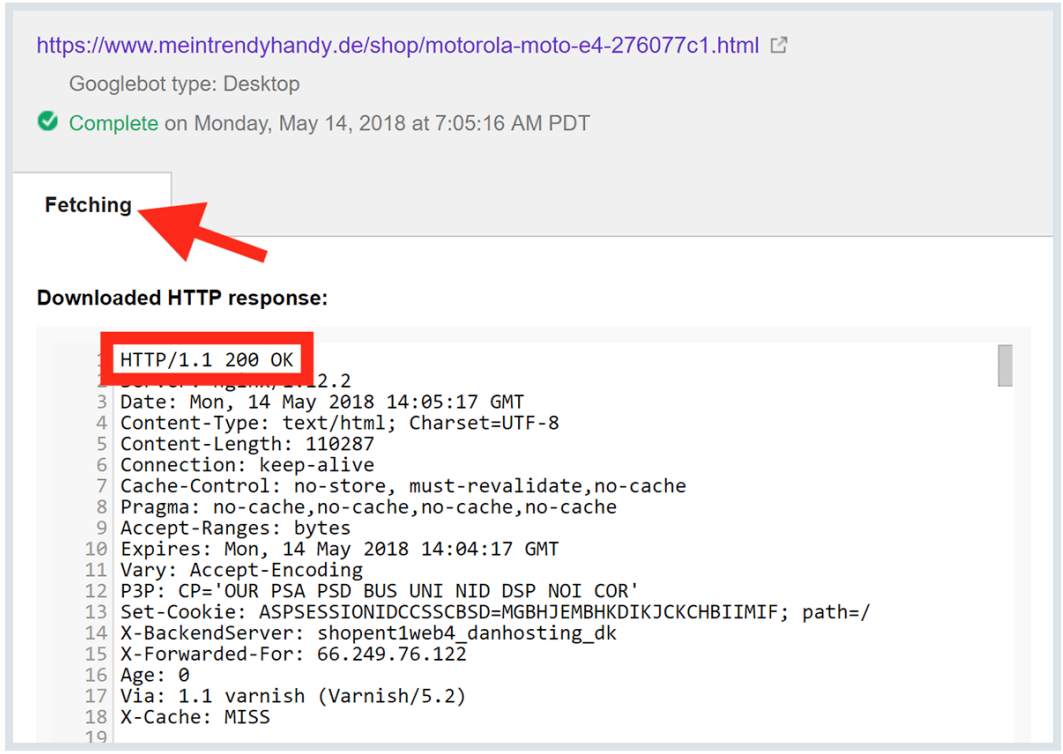
Here are a few examples:

Redirect Error



Everything looks good here.

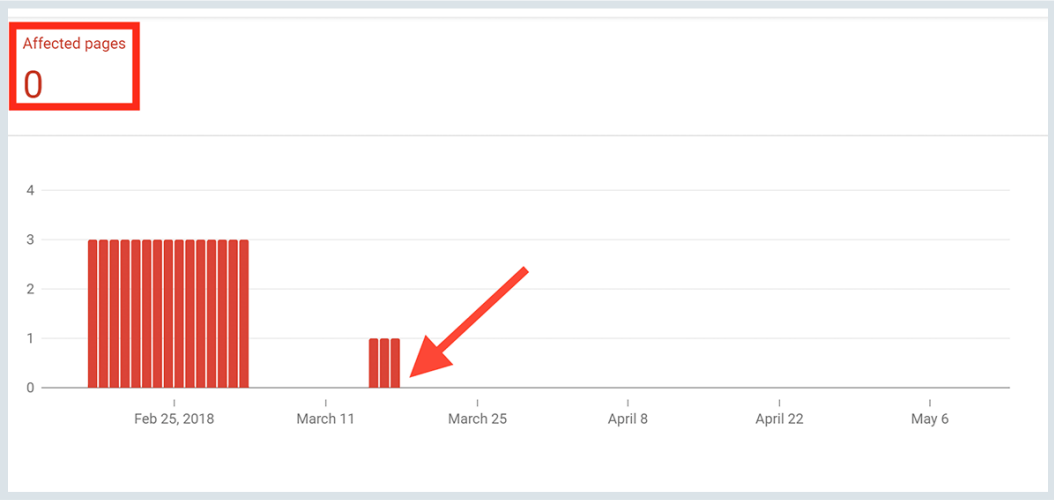
Crawl Error



Don’t see any issues here.

Server Error

The server error has disappeared on its own:



Must have been a temporary issue with hosting. But you'd want to keep an eye on that to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Bottom line? With a bit of work, you can fix ALL errors from the Index Coverage report.

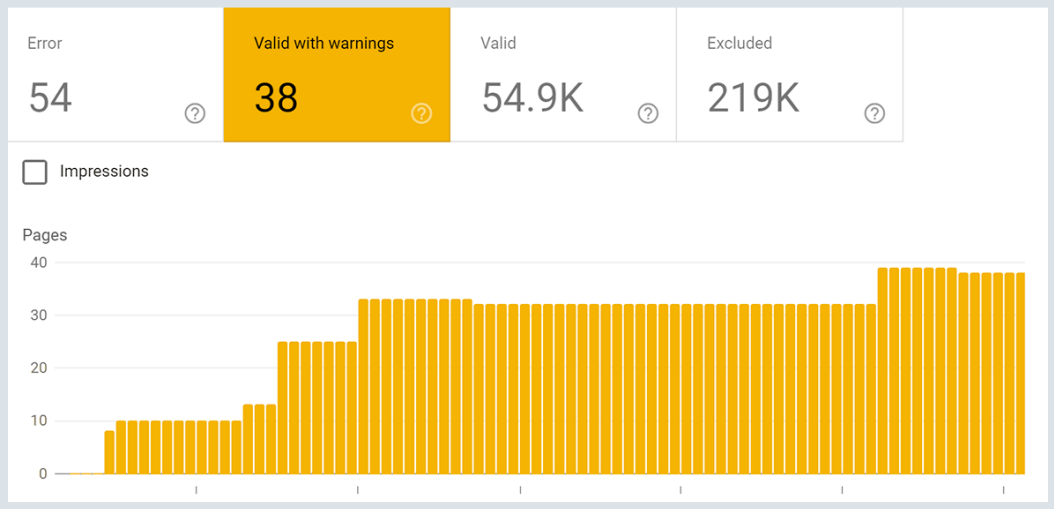
How to Fix “Warnings” In The Index Coverage Report

I don’t know about you...

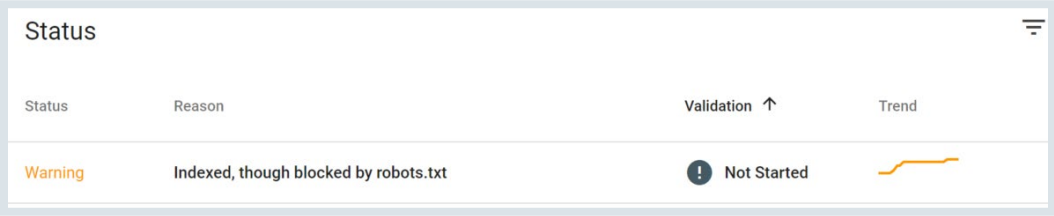
...but I don’t like to leave anything to chance when it comes to SEO.

Which means I don’t mess around when I see a bright orange “Warning”.

So let’s hit the “Valid with warnings” tab in the Index Coverage Report.



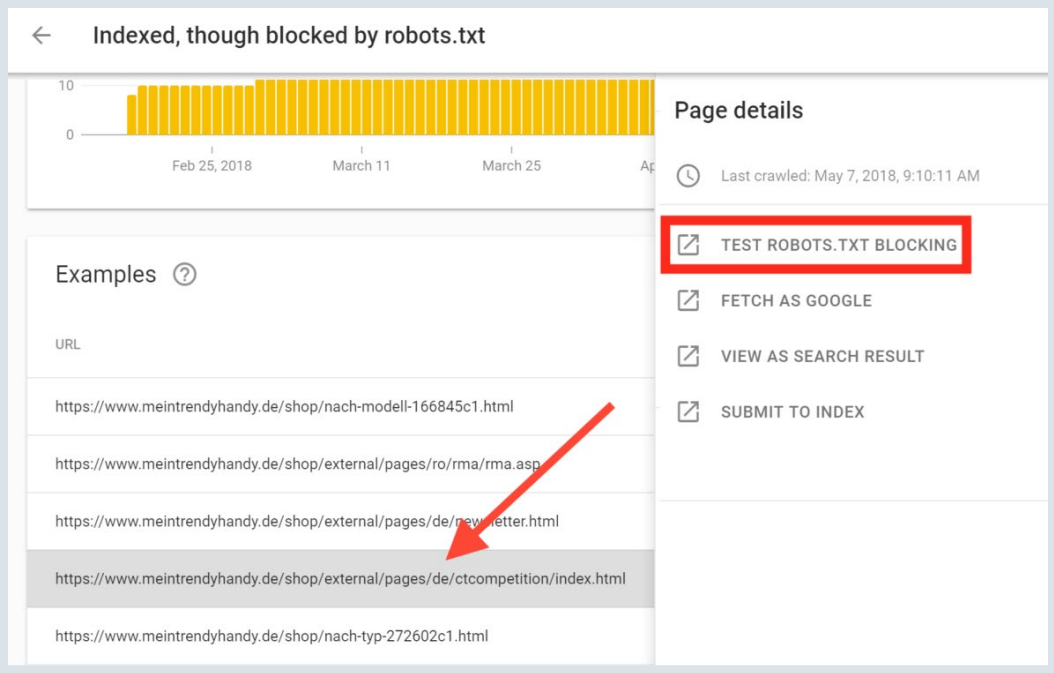
This time there's just one warning: "Indexed, though blocked by robots.txt".



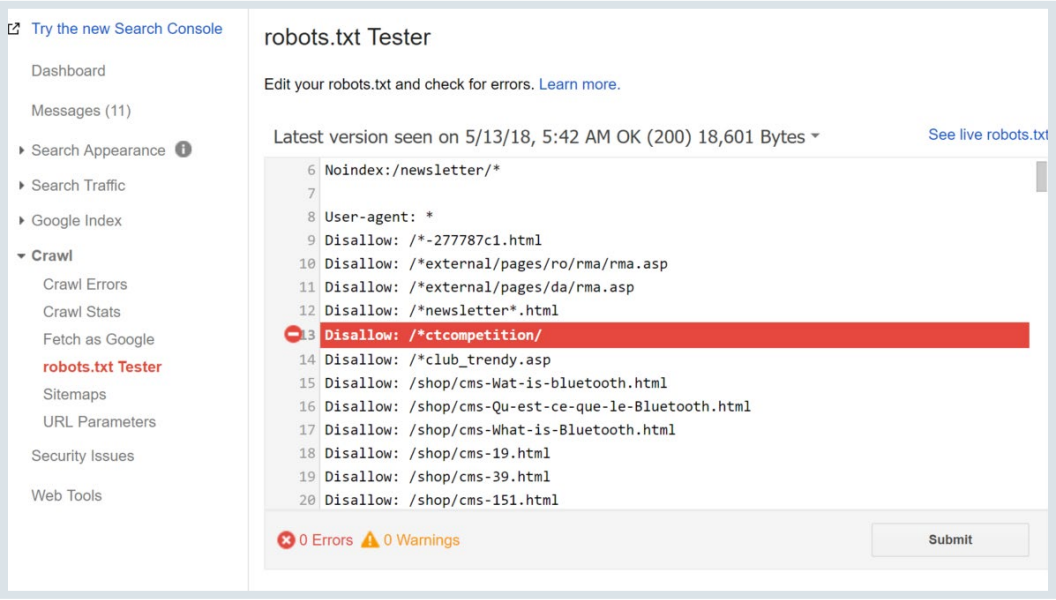
So what's going on here?

Let's find out.

The GSC is telling us the page is getting blocked by robots.txt. So instead of hitting "Fetch As Google", click on "Test Robots.txt Blocking":



This takes us to the robots.txt tester in the old Search Console. As it turns out, this URL IS getting blocked by robots.txt.



So what's the fix?

Well, if you want the page indexed, you should unblock it from Robots.txt (duh).

But if you don't want it indexed, you have two options:

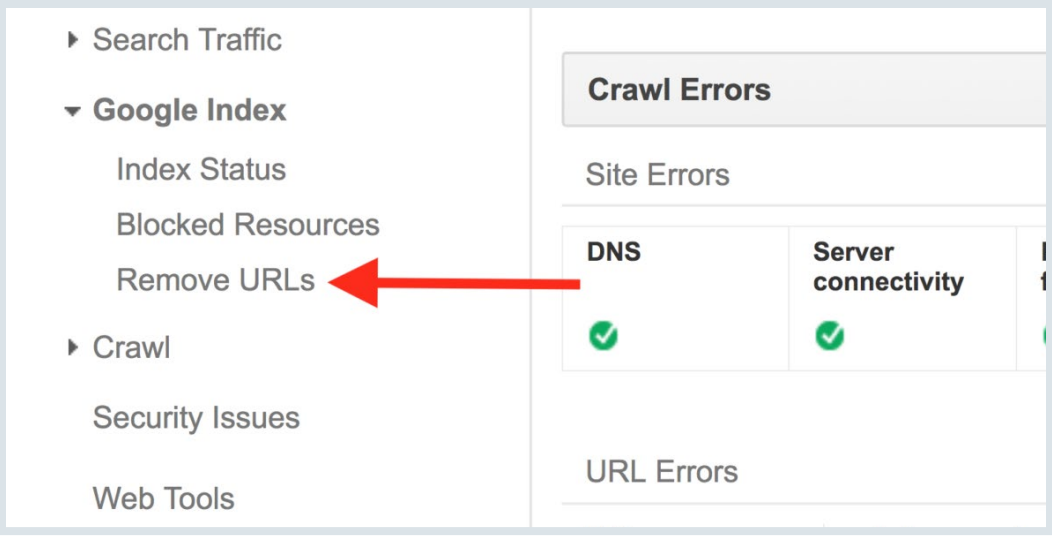
1. Add the "noindex,follow" tag to the page. And unblock it from robots.txt
2. Get rid of the page using the URL Removal Tool

Let's see how to use the URL Removal Tool:

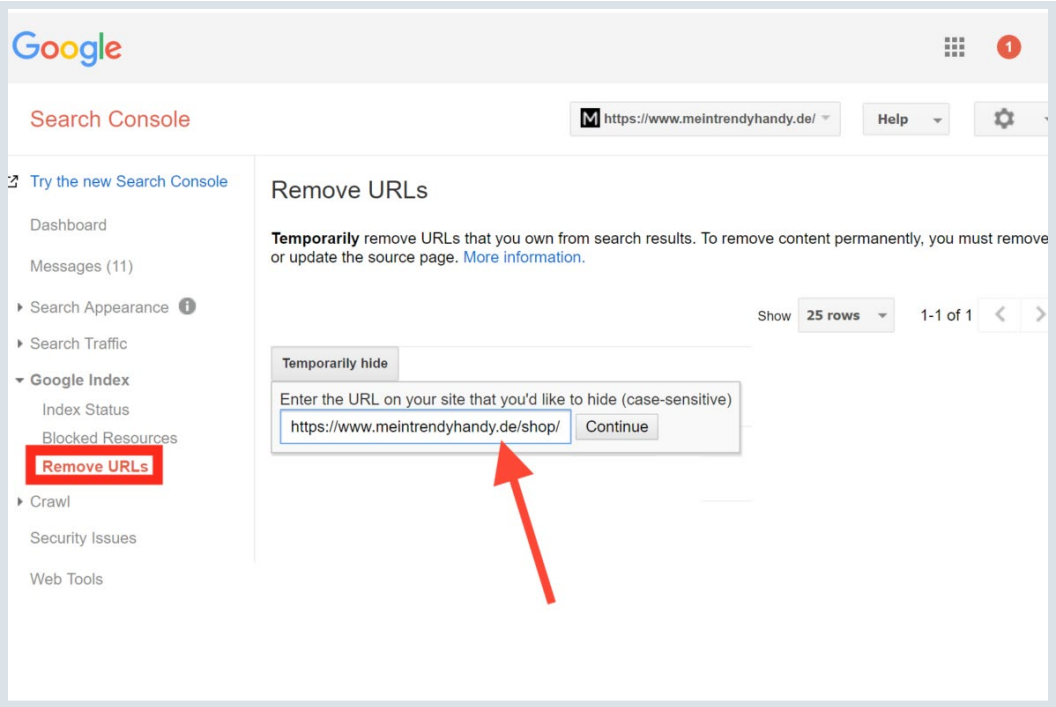
How To Use The URL Removal Tool In Search Console

The URL Removal Tool is a quick and easy way to remove pages from Google's index.

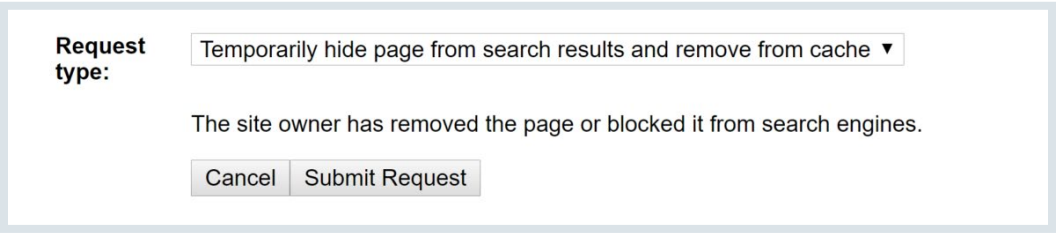
Click on "Google Index" in the sidebar of the old GSC. Then, click "Remove URLs".



Finally, paste in the URL you want to remove:



~~Double~~ triple check that you entered the right URL, then click "Submit Request".



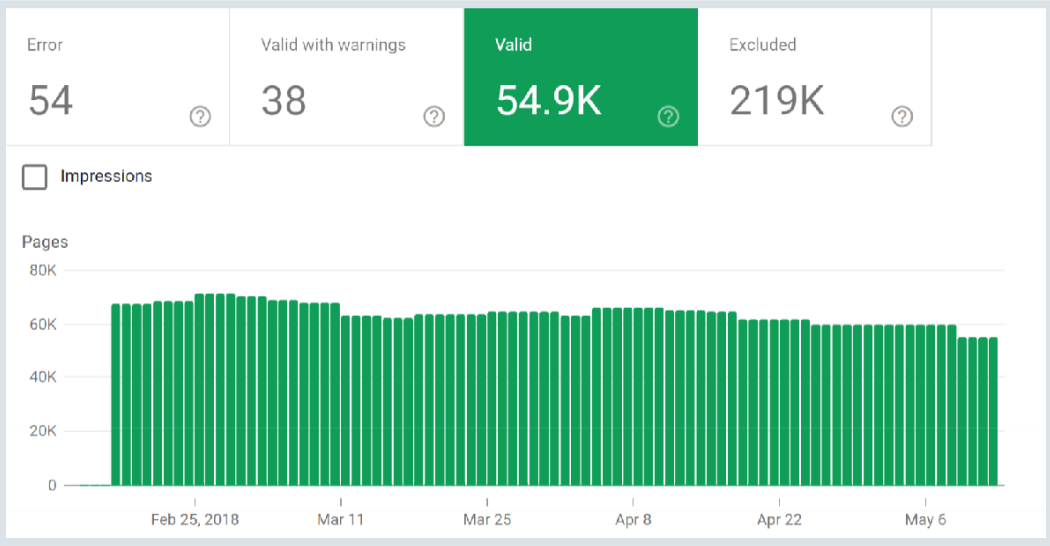
Note: A removal is only active for 90 days. After that Googlebot will attempt to recache the page.

But considering the page is blocked through robots.txt...

...this page will be gone for good!

Check Indexed Pages For Possible Issues

Now let's move on to the "Valid" tab. This tells us how many pages are indexed in Google.



What should you look for here? Two things:

#1: Unexpected drop (or increase) of indexed pages

Notice a sudden drop in the number of indexed pages?

That could be a sign that something's wrong:

- Maybe a bunch of pages are blocking Googlebot.
- Or maybe you added a noindex tag by mistake.

Either way:

Unless you purposely deindexed a bunch of pages, you definitely want to check this out.

On the flip side:

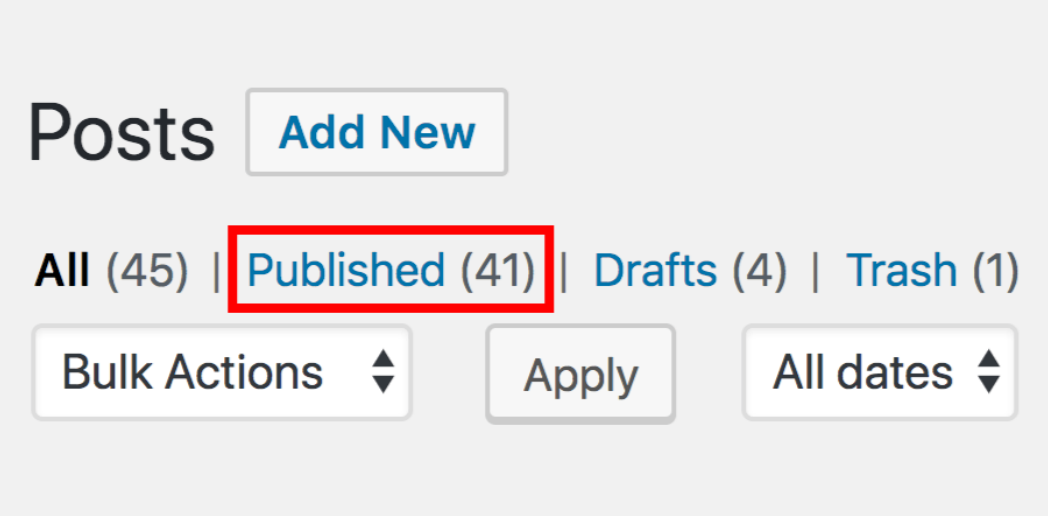
What if you notice a sudden increase in indexed pages?

Again, that might be a sign that something is wrong.

(For example, maybe you unblocked a bunch of pages that are supposed to be blocked).

#2: An unexpectedly high number of indexed pages

There are currently 41 posts at Backlinko.



So when I take a look at the "Valid" report in Index Coverage, I'd expect to see about that many pages indexed.

But if it's WAY higher than 41? That's a problem. And I'm going to have to fix it.

Oh, in case you're wondering... here's what I do see:

So no need to worry about me

Make Sure Excluded Stuff Should Be Excluded

Now:

There are plenty of good reasons to block search engines from indexing a page.

Maybe it's a login page.

Maybe the page contains duplicate content.

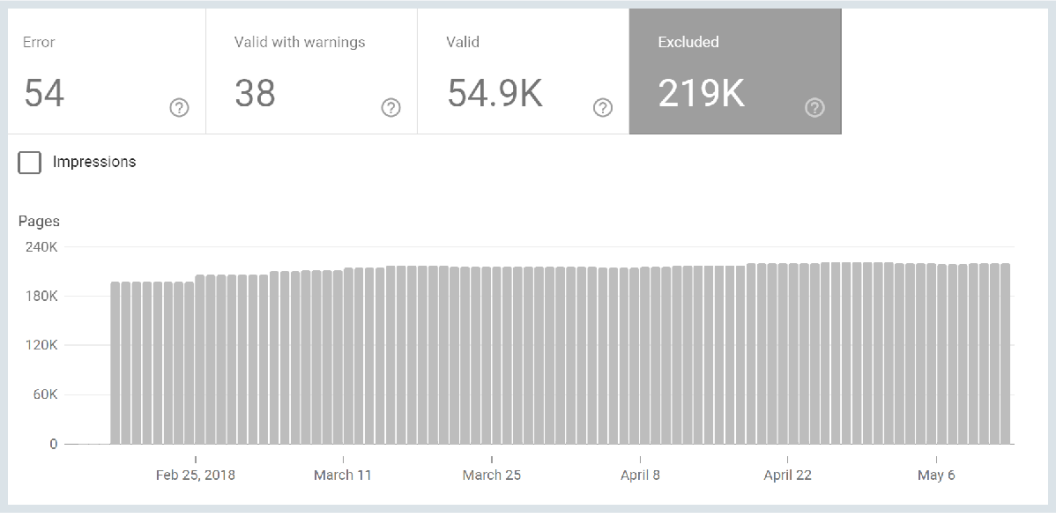
Or maybe the page is low quality.

> Note: When I say "low quality", I don't mean the page is garbage. It could be that the page is useful for users... but not for search engines.

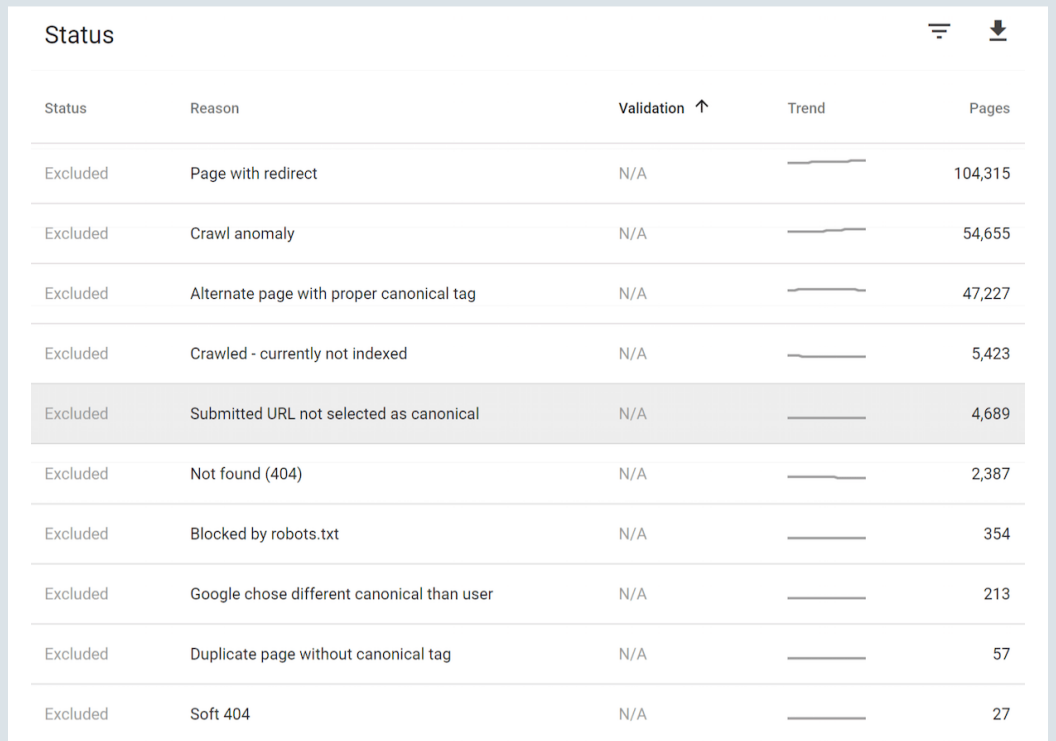
That said:

You definitely want to make sure Google doesn't exclude pages that you WANT indexed.

In this case, we have a lot of excluded pages...



And if you scroll down, you get a list of reasons that each page is excluded from Google's index.



Status	Reason	Validation	Trend	Pages
Excluded	Page with redirect	N/A		104,315
Excluded	Crawl anomaly	N/A		54,655
Excluded	Alternate page with proper canonical tag	N/A		47,227
Excluded	Crawled - currently not indexed	N/A		5,423
Excluded	Submitted URL not selected as canonical	N/A		4,689
Excluded	Not found (404)	N/A		2,387
Excluded	Blocked by robots.txt	N/A		354
Excluded	Google chose different canonical than user	N/A		213
Excluded	Duplicate page without canonical tag	N/A		57
Excluded	Soft 404	N/A		27

So let's break this down...

"Page with redirect"

The page is redirecting to another URL.

This is totally fine. Unless there are backlinks (or internal links) pointing to that URL, they'll eventually stop trying to index it.

"Alternate page with proper canonical tag"

Google found an alternative version of this page somewhere else.

That's what a canonical URL is supposed to do. So that's A-OK.

"Crawl Anomaly"

Yikes! Could be a number of things. So we'll need to investigate.

In this case, it looks like the pages listed are returning a 404.

“Crawled – currently not indexed”

Hmmm...

These are pages that Google has crawled, but (for some reason) are not indexed.

Google doesn’t give you the exact reason they won’t index the page.

But from my experience, this error means: the page isn’t good enough to warrant a spot in the search results.

So, what should you do to fix this?

My advice: work on improving the quality of any pages listed.

For example, if it’s a category page, add some content that describes that category. If the page has lots of duplicate content, make it unique. If the page doesn’t have much content on it, beef it up.

Basically, make the page worthy of Google’s index.

“Submitted URL not selected as Canonical”

This is Google telling you:

“This page has the same content as a bunch of other pages. But we think another URL is better”

So they’ve excluded this page from the index.

My advice: if you have duplicate content on a number of pages, add the noindex meta robots tag to all duplicate pages except the one you want indexed.

“Blocked by robots.txt”

These are pages that robots.txt is blocking Google from crawling.

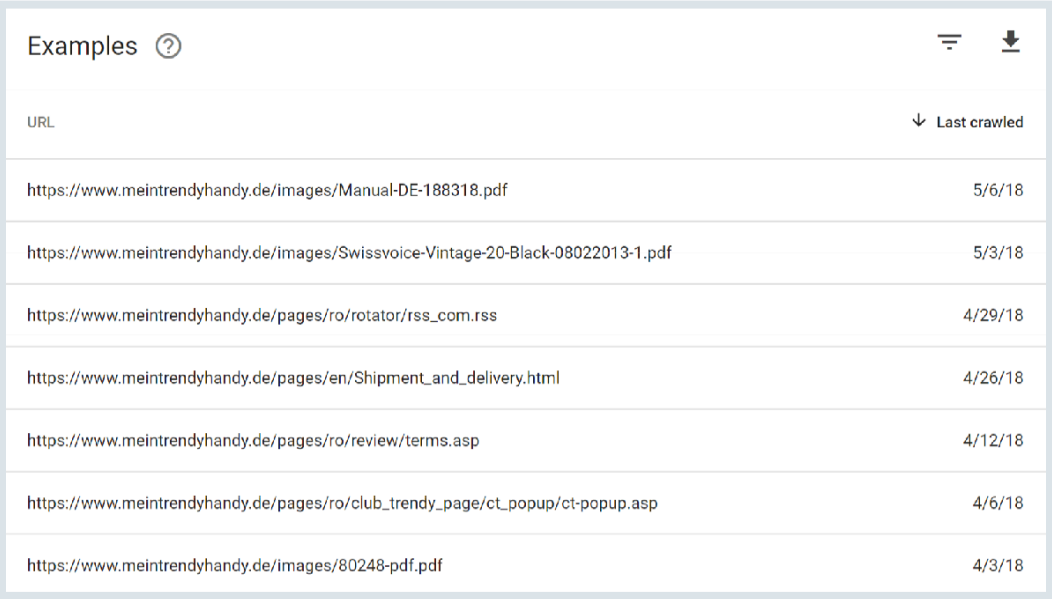
It’s worth double checking these errors to make sure what you’re blocking is meant to be blocked.

If it’s all good? Then robots.txt is doing its job and there’s nothing to worry about.

“Duplicate page without canonical tag”

The page is part of set of duplicate pages, and doesn’t include a canonical URL.

In this case it’s pretty easy to see what’s up.



Examples

URL	Last crawled
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/images/Manual-DE-188318.pdf	5/6/18
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/images/Swissvoice-Vintage-20-Black-08022013-1.pdf	5/3/18
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/pages/ro/rotator/rss_com.rss	4/29/18
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/pages/en/Shipment_and_delivery.html	4/26/18
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/pages/ro/review/terms.asp	4/12/18
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/pages/ro/club_trendy_page/ct_popup/ct-popup.asp	4/6/18
https://www.meintrendyhandy.de/images/80248-pdf.pdf	4/3/18

We've got a number of PDF documents. And these PDFs contain content from other pages on the site.

Honestly, this isn't a big deal. But to be on the safe side, you ask your web developer to block these PDFs using robots.txt. That way, Google ONLY indexes the original content.

"Discovered – currently not indexed"

Google has crawled these pages, but hasn't included them in the index yet.

"Excluded by 'noindex' tag"

All good. The noindex tag is doing its job.

So that's the Index Coverage report. I'm sure you'll agree: it's a VERY impressive tool.

Check The "HTML Improvements" Report

I'm no coder.

But even I know that screwing up your HTML can hurt your SEO.

And this is especially true for your title and description tags.

In short, every page on your site should have:

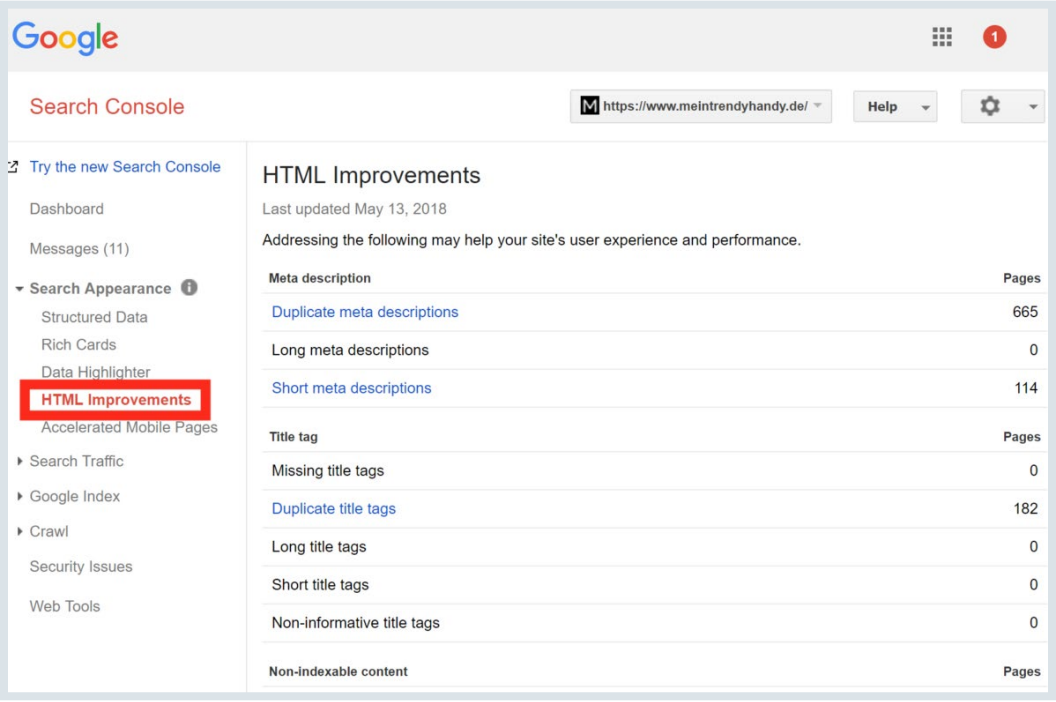
1. A unique, well written title (up to approx. 65-70 characters)
2. A unique, well written meta description (up to approx. 300 characters)

Every. Single. Page.

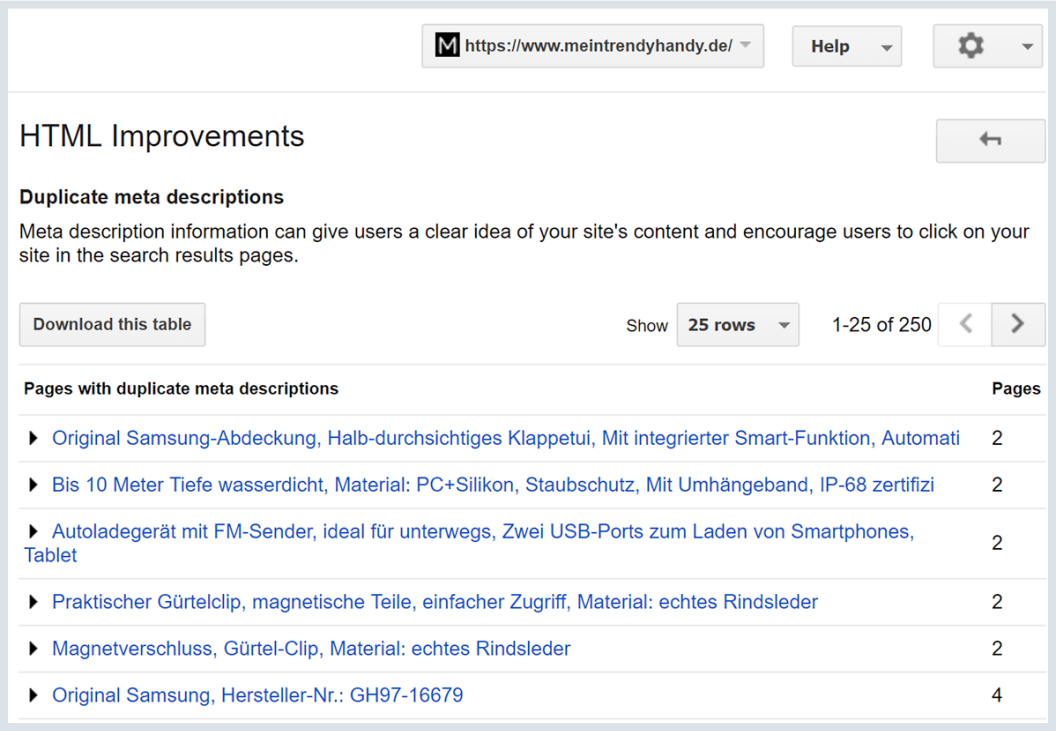
(Yes, even if you run an ecommerce site with a bazillion pages)

Fortunately, it's EXTREMELY easy to spot HTML problems in the Search Console.

Just load up the “HTML Improvements” report and Google will tell you what’s up:



Need specifics? Just click on a category for a full list of pages with issues.



Simple.

Chapter 3

Get More Organic Traffic with the Performance Report

In this chapter we're going to deep dive into my favorite part of the GSC: "The Performance Report".

Why is it my favorite?

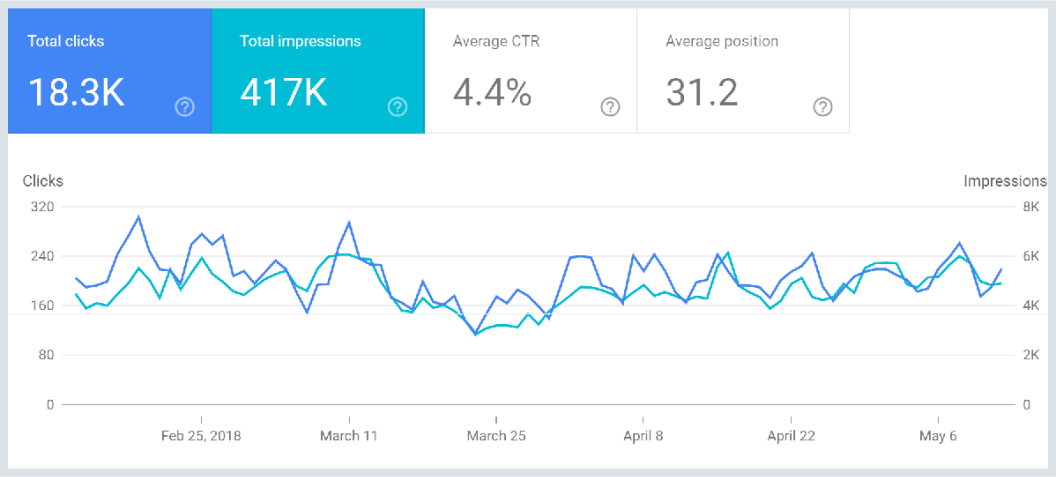
Because I've used this report to increase organic traffic to Backlinko again and again.

I've also seen lots of other people use the Performance Report to get similar results.

So without further ado, let's get started...

What Is The Performance Report?

The “Performance” report in Google Search Console shows you your site’s overall search performance in Google. This report not only shows you how many clicks you get, but also lets you know your CTR and average ranking position.

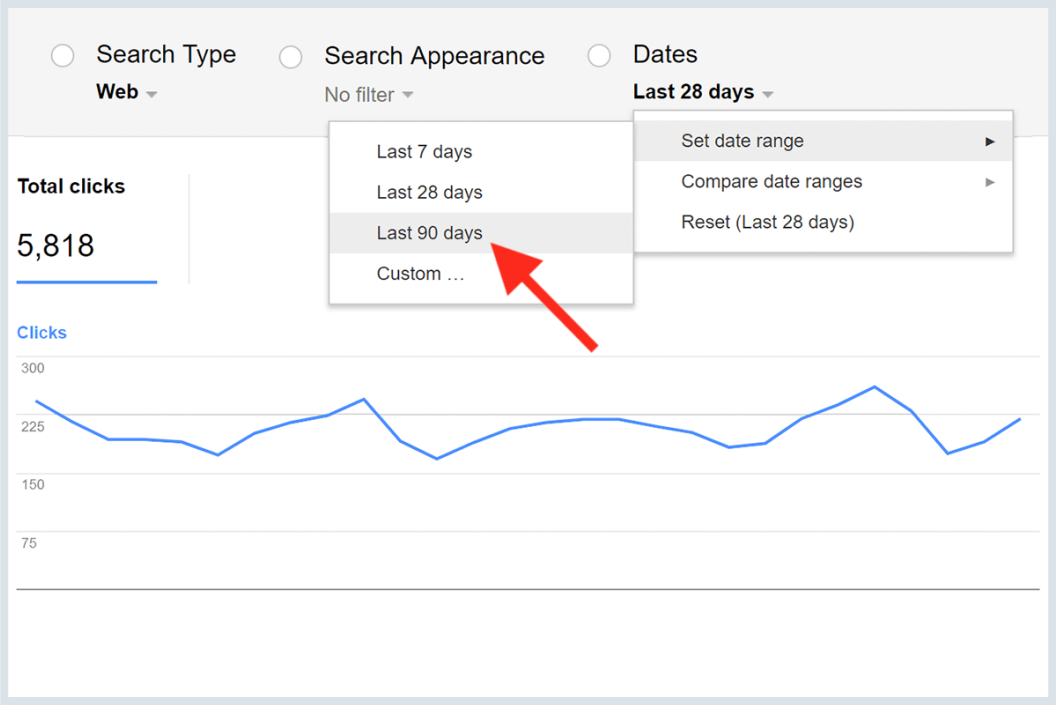


And this new Performance Report replaces the “Search Analytics” report in the old Search Console (and the old Google Webmaster Tools).

Yes, a lot of the data is the same as the old “Search Analytics” report. But you can now do cool stuff with the data you get (like filter to only show AMP results).

But my favorite addition to the new version is this:

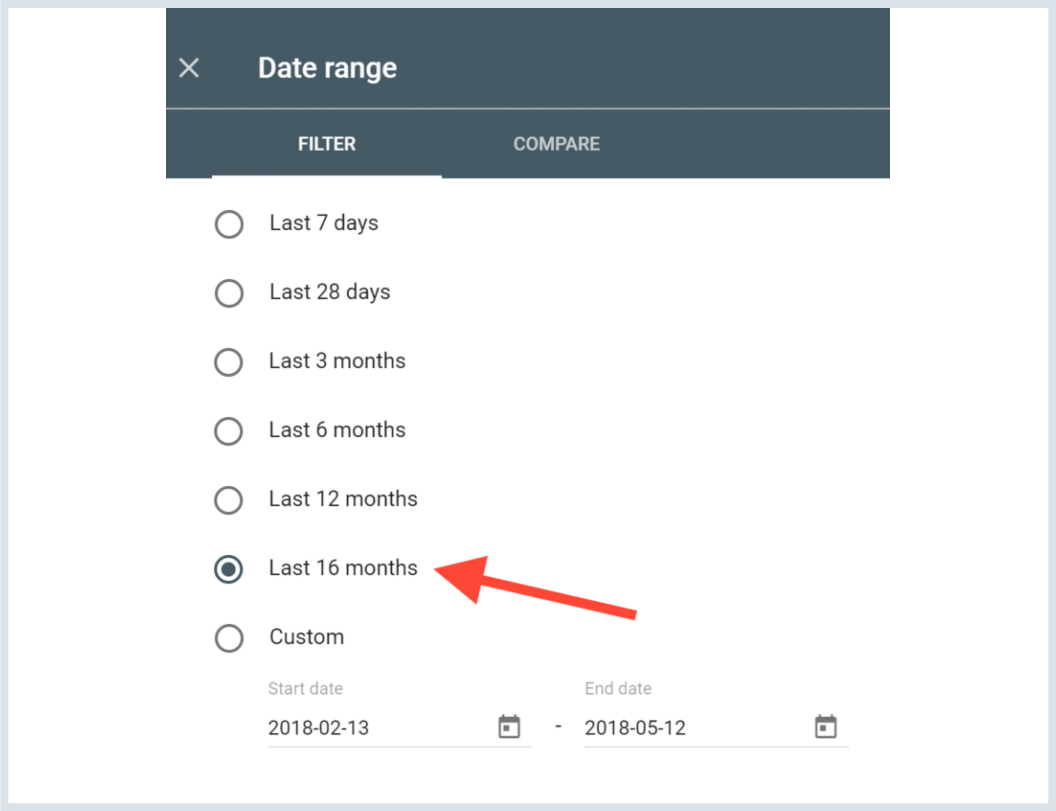
In the old Search Analytics report you could only see search data from the last 90 days.



(Which sucked)

Now?

We get 16 MONTHS of data:



For an SEO junkie like me, 16 months of data is like opening presents on Christmas morning.

(In fact, I used to pay for a tool to automatically pull and save my old Google Webmaster Tools data. Now, thanks to the beta version of the new GSC, it's a free service)

How To Supercharge Your CTR With The Performance Report

There's no question that CTR is a key Google ranking factor.

The question is:

How can you improve your CTR?

The GSC Performance Report.

> Note: Like I did in the last chapter, I'm going to walk you through a real-life case study.
>
> Last time, we looked at an ecommerce site. Now we're going to see how to use the GSC to get more traffic to a blog (this one).
>
> Specifically, you're going to see how I used The Performance Report to increase this site's CTR by 63.2%.

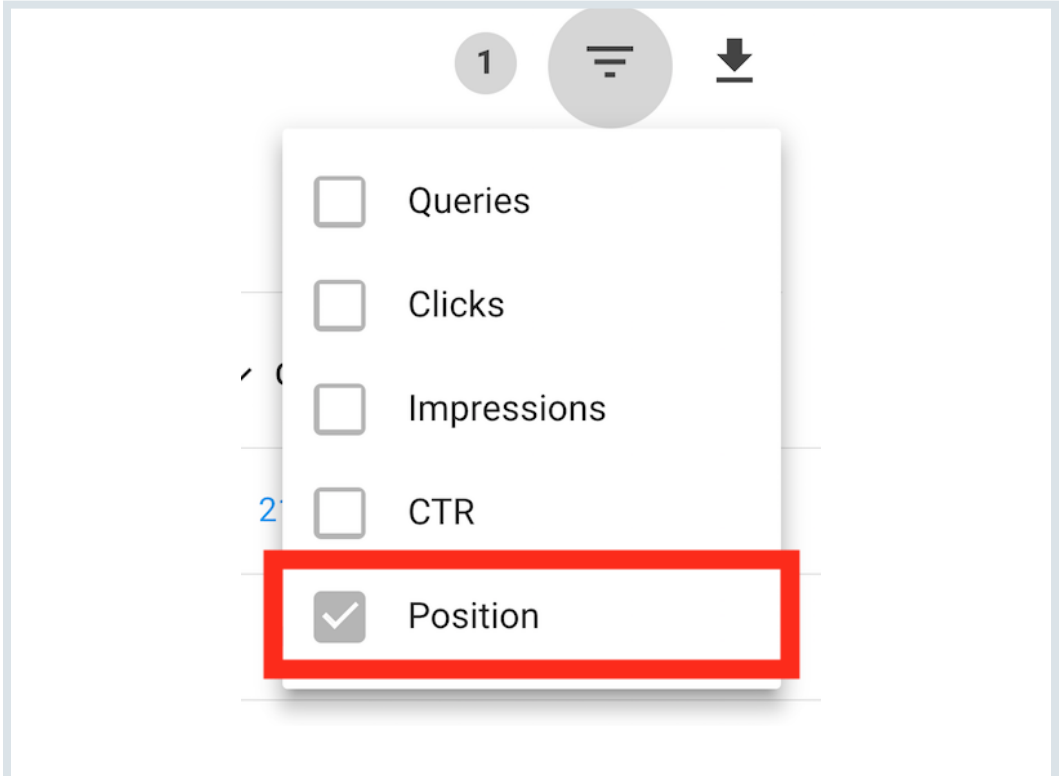
So let's fire up the Performance report in the new Search Console and get started...

#1: Find Pages With a Low CTR

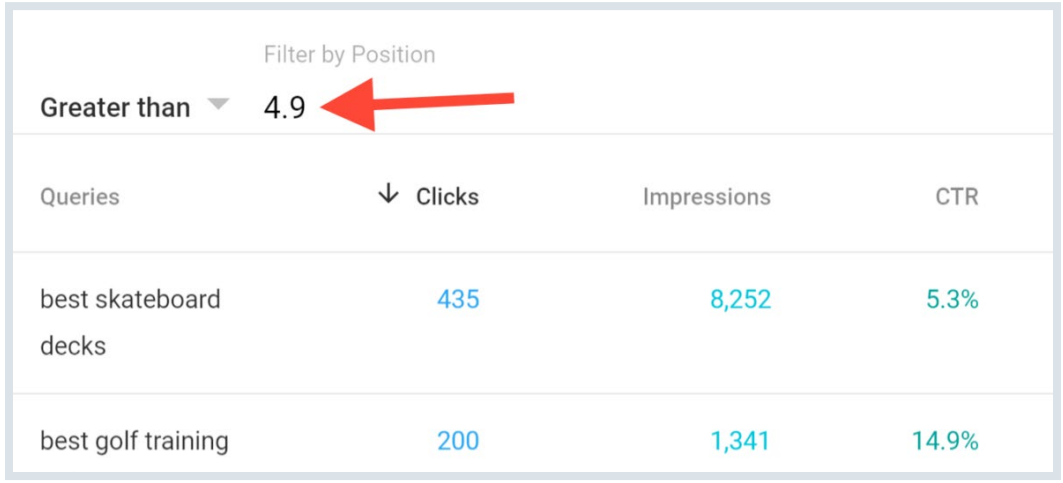
First, highlight the “Average CTR” and “Average Position” tabs:

You want to focus on pages that are ranking #5 or lower... and have a bad CTR. So let’s filter out positions 1-4.

To do that, click on the filter button, and check the “Position” box.

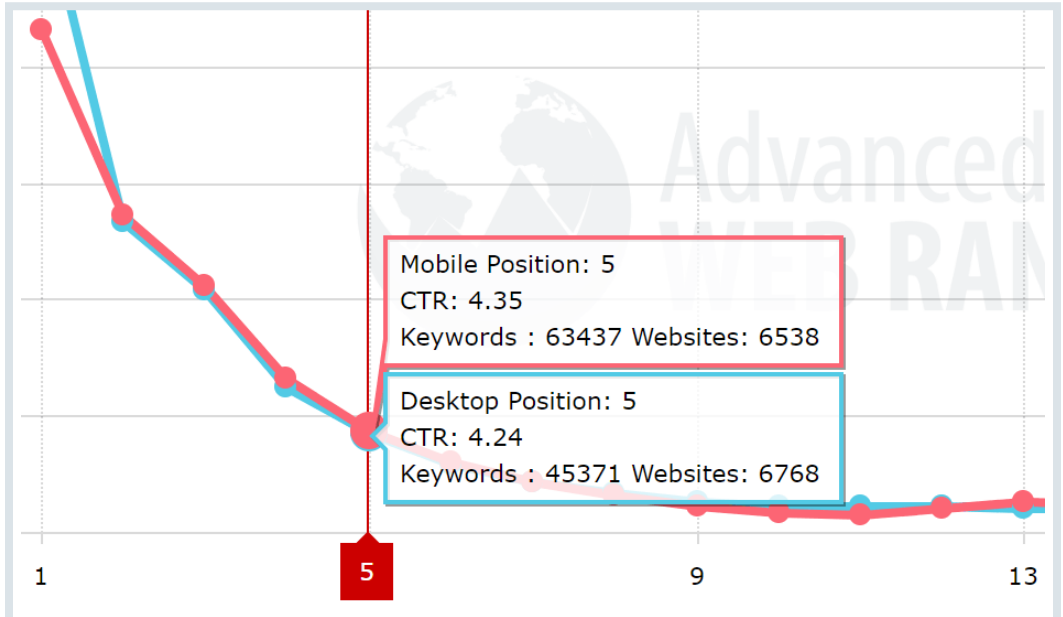


You'll now see a filter box above the data. So we can go ahead and set this to "Greater than" 4.9:



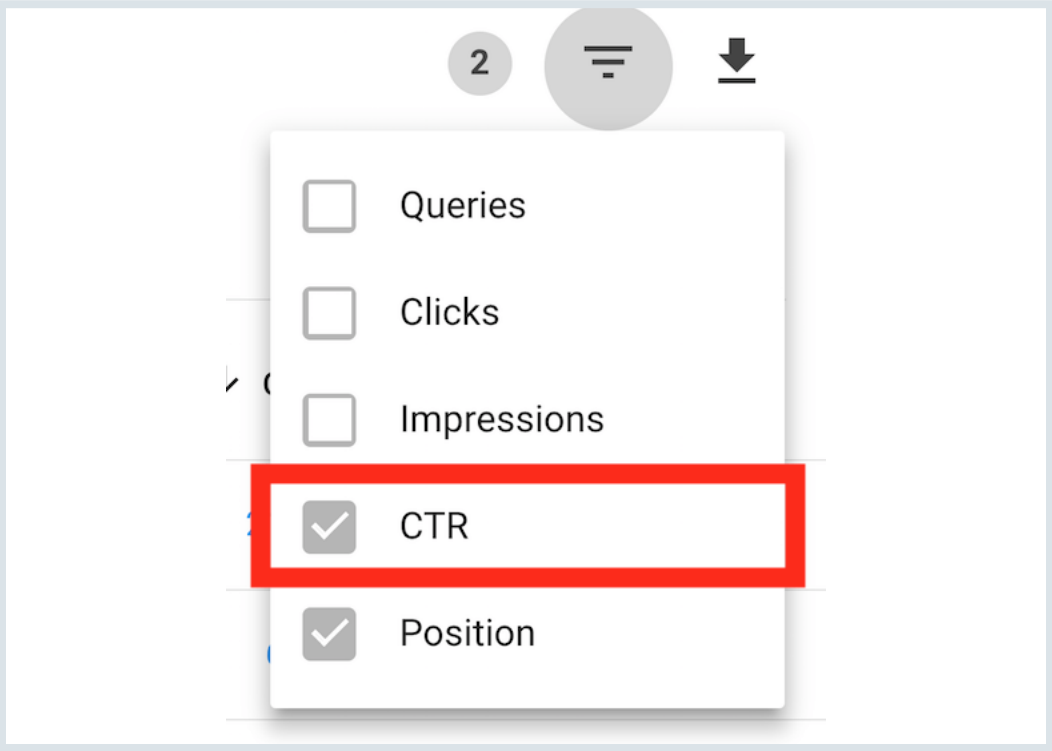
Now you have a list of pages that are ranking #5 or below.

According to Advanced Web Ranking, position #5 in Google should get a CTR of around 4.35%:



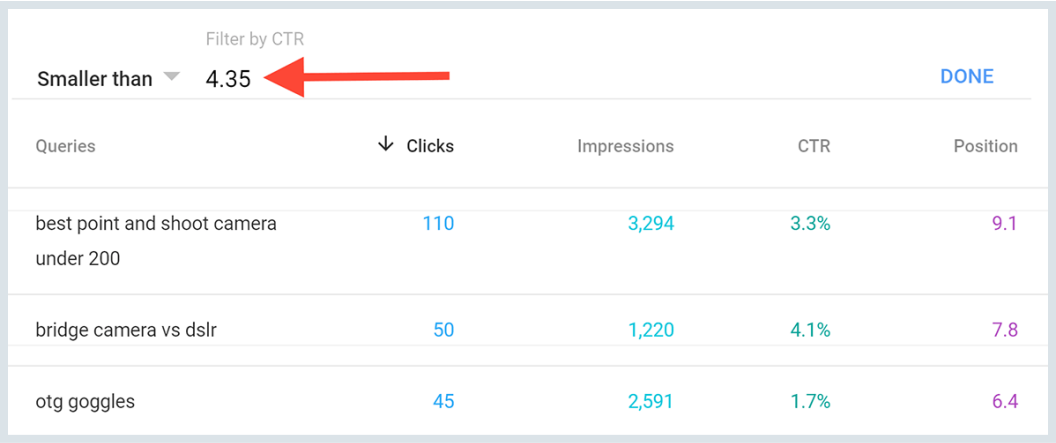
You want to filter out everything that's beating that expected CTR of 4.35%. That way you can focus on pages that are underperforming.

So click the filter button again and check the "CTR" box.



(Make sure you leave the "Position" box ticked)

Then, set the CTR filter to "Smaller than" 4.35.



Queries	Clicks	Impressions	CTR	Position
best point and shoot camera under 200	110	3,294	3.3%	9.1
bridge camera vs dslr	50	1,220	4.1%	7.8
otg goggles	45	2,591	1.7%	6.4

So what have we got?

A list of keywords that are ranking 5 or lower AND have a CTR less than 4.35%.

In other words:

Keywords you could get more traffic from. We just need to bump up their CTR.

So:

Let's see if we can find a keyword with a lower-than-expected CTR. When I scroll down the list... this keyword sticks out like a sore thumb.

best helmet brands	44	1,507	2.9%	5.8

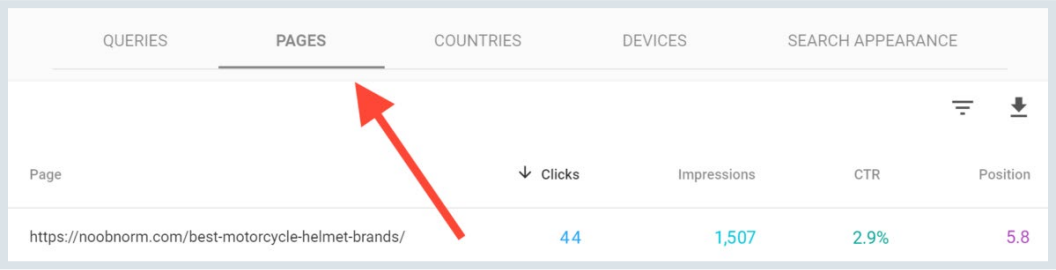
1,504 impressions and only 43 clicks... ouch! I know that I can do better than 2.9%.

Now that we've found a keyword with a bad CTR, it's time to turn things around.

#2: Find the page

Next, you want to see which page from your site ranks for the keyword you just found.

To do that, just click on the query with the bad CTR. Then, click "Pages":



Easy.

#3: Take a look at ALL the keywords this page ranks for

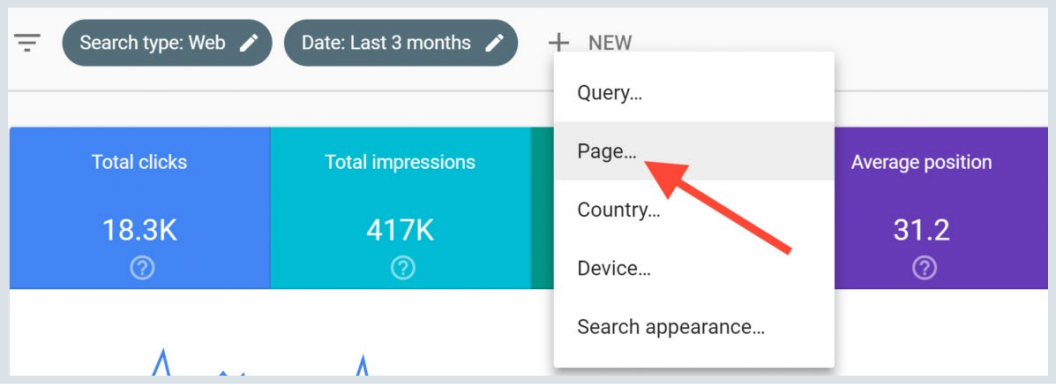
There's no point improving our CTR for one keyword... only to mess it up for 10 other keywords.

So here's something really cool:

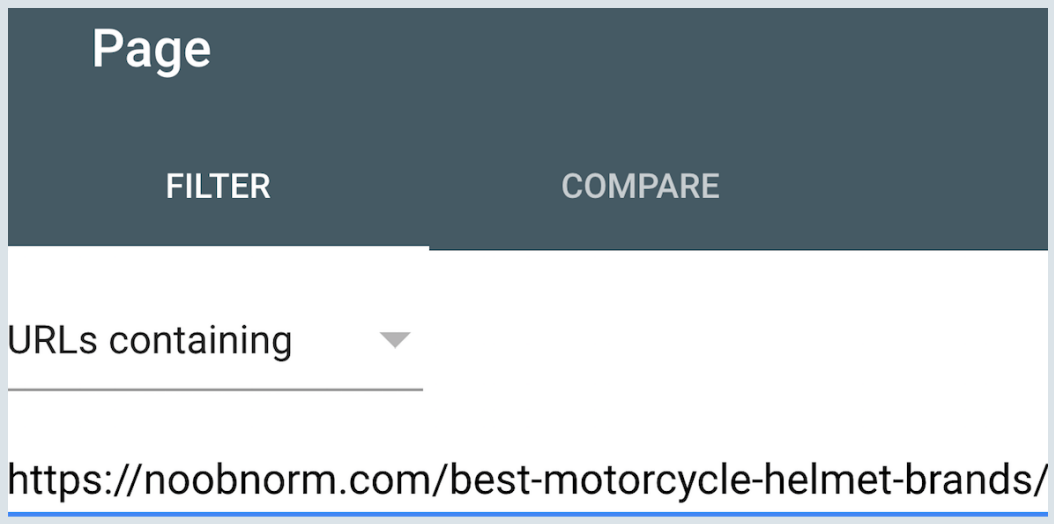
The Performance report can show you ALL keywords that your page ranks for.

And it's SUPER easy to do.

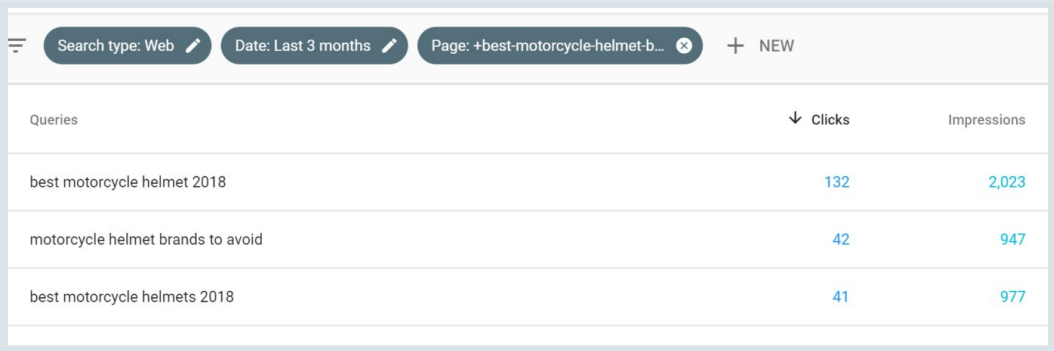
Just click on "+ New" in the top bar and hit "page...".



Then enter the URL you want to view queries for.



Bingo! You get a list of keywords that page ranks for:



You can see that the page has shown up over 42,000 times in Google...but only got around 1,500 clicks.

So this page's CTR is pretty bad across the board.

(Not just for this particular keyword)

#4: Optimize your title and description to get more clicks

I have a few go-to tactics that I use to bump up my CTR.

But my all time favorite is: Power Words.

What are power words?

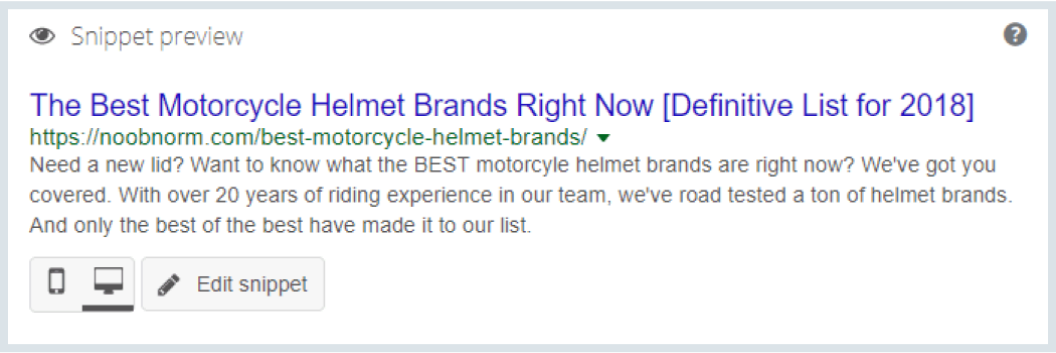
Power words show that someone can get quick and easy results from your content.

And they've been proven again and again to attract clicks in the SERPs.

Here are a few of my favorite Power Words that you can include in your title and description:

- Today
- Right now
- Fast
- Works quickly
- Step-by-step
- Easy
- Best
- Quick
- Definitive
- Simple

So I added a few of these Power Words to the page's title and description tag:



#5: Monitor the results

Finally, wait at least 10 days. Then log back in.

Why 10 days?

It can take a few days for Google to reindex your page.

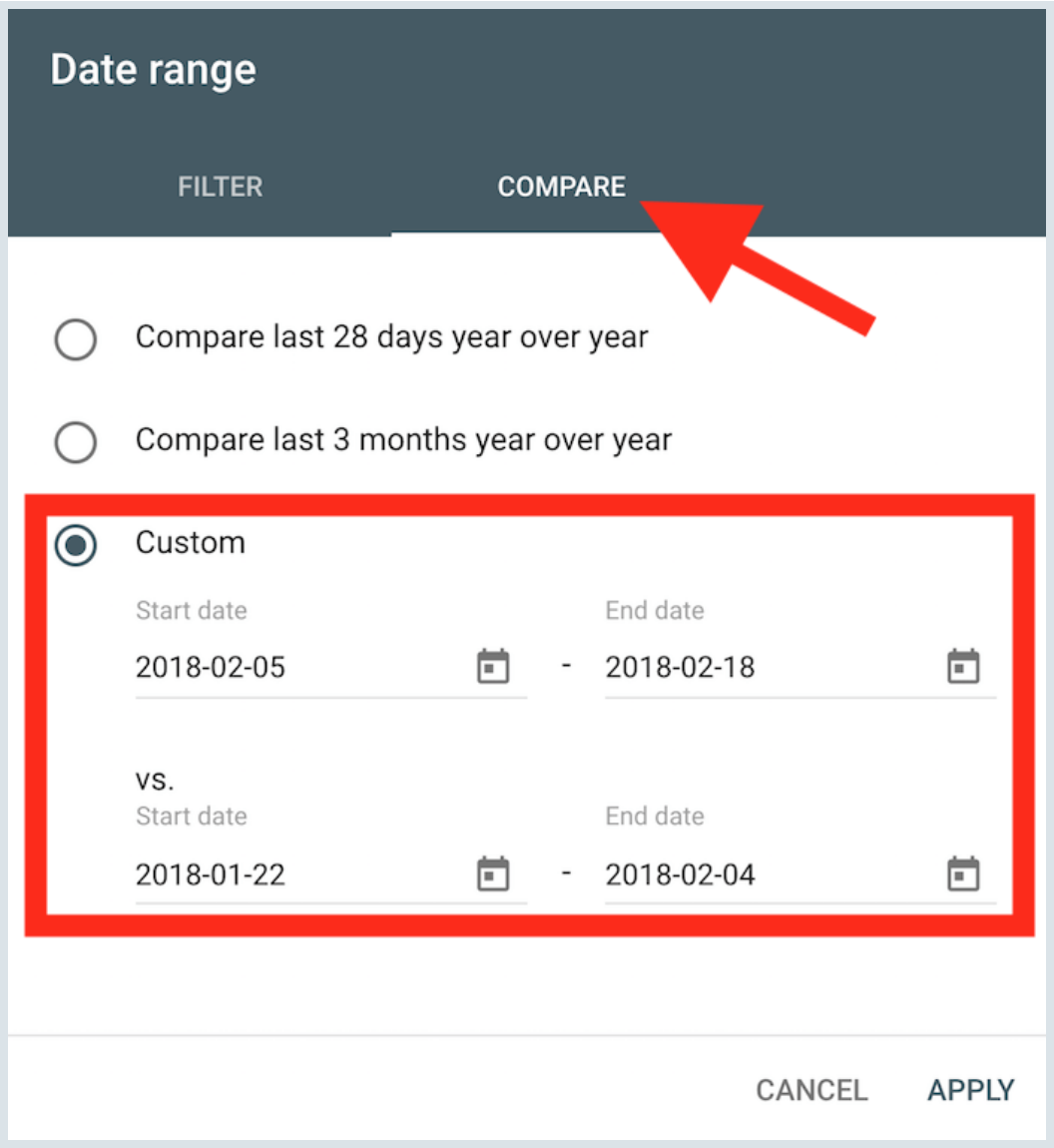
Then, the new page has to be live for about a week for you to get meaningful data.

With that, I have great news:

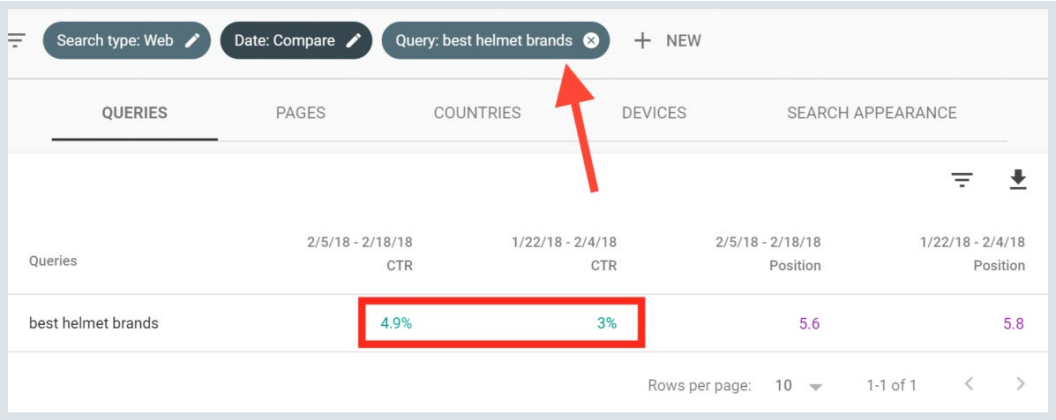
With the new Search Console, comparing CTR over two date ranges is a piece of cake.

Just click on the date filter:

Select the date range. I'm going to compare the 2 week period before the title change, to the 2 weeks after:



Finally, filter the data to show search queries that include the keyword you found in step #1 (in this case: “best helmet brands”).



Boom!

We've increased our CTR by 63.2%. And just as important: we're now beating the average CTR for position 5.

Pro tip: You'll find that different title formats work better in different niches. So you might have to experiment to find the perfect format for YOUR industry. The good news: Search Console gives you the data you need to do just that.

How To Find "Opportunity Keywords" With GSC's Performance Report

If the last example didn't convince you of just how awesome the new Performance Report is, then I guarantee this one will.

What Is An Opportunity Keyword?

An opportunity keyword is a phrase that ranks between positions 8-20 AND gets a decent number of impressions.

Why is this such a big opportunity?

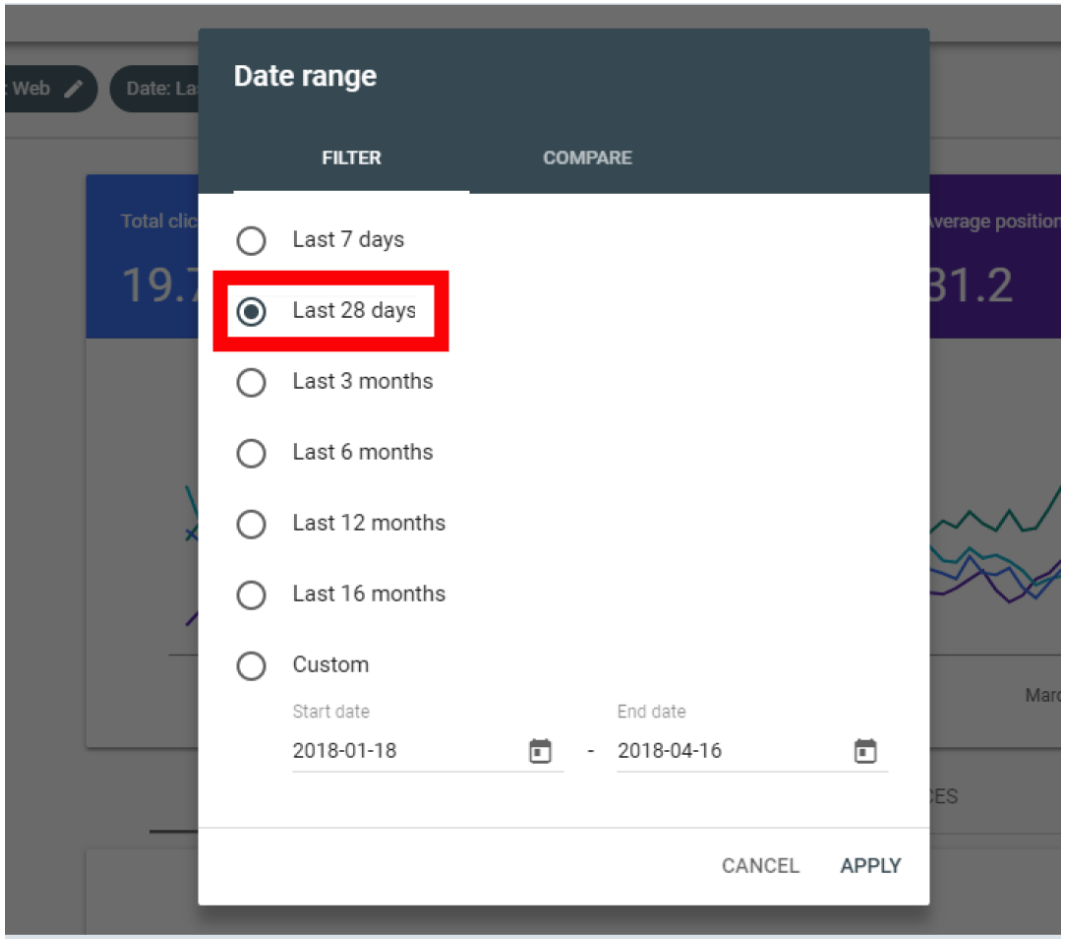
#1: Google already considers your page to be a decent fit for the keyword (otherwise you wouldn't be anywhere close to page 1). When you give your page some TLC, you can usually bump it up to the first page.

#2: You're not relying on iffy keyword volume data from third party SEO tools. The impression data you get from the GSC tells you EXACTLY how much traffic to expect.

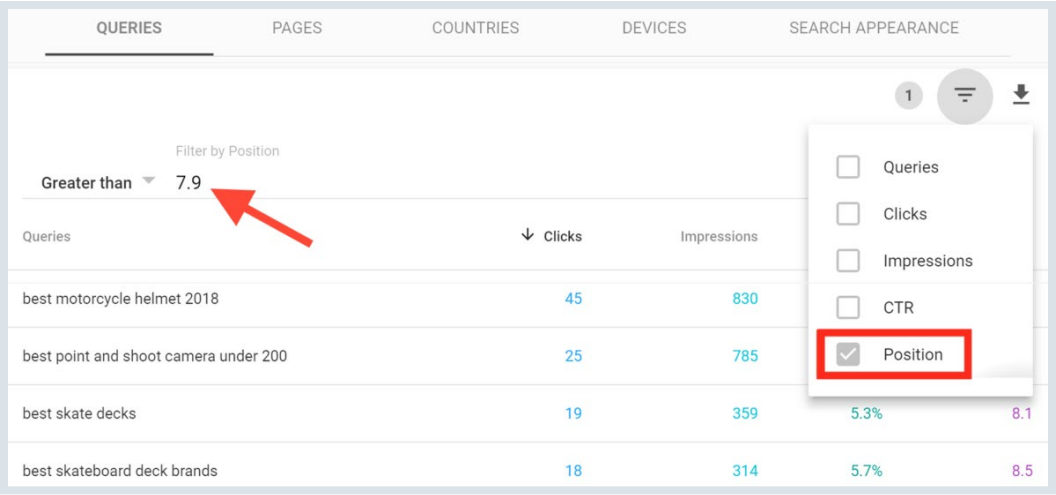
Mining For Gold With Google Search Console's Performance Report

Finding these gold nugget keywords in the Performance report is a simple, 3-step process.

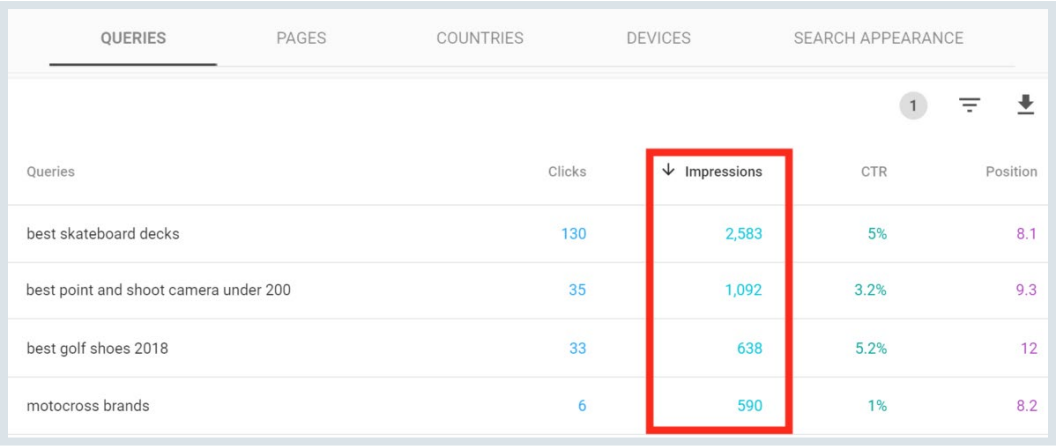
1. Set the date range to the last 28 days:



2. Filter the report to show keywords ranking “Greater than” 7.9



3. Finally, sort the by “Impressions”. And you get a huge list of “Opportunity Keywords”:

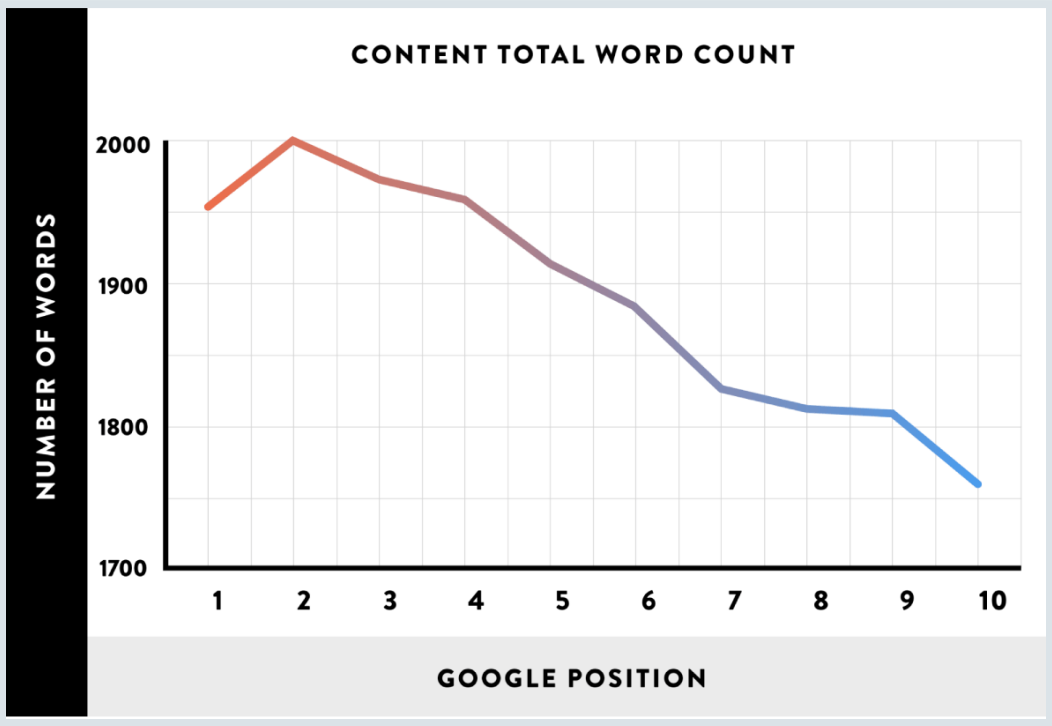


Here’s what to do to push those pages up:

#1: Cover The Topic In INSANE Detail

Google LOVES content that covers 100% of a topic.

That's probably why the average word count of a page 1 result is 1,890 words.



So make sure your content is a BEAST. It should cover everything there is to know about your topic.

(Kind of like this guide you're reading)

#2: Improve Dwell Time With Video

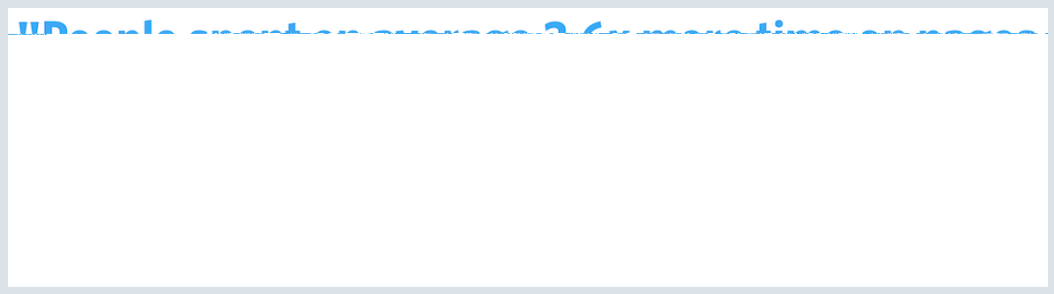
Dwell time is the amount of time a Google searcher spends on your page.

And when you increase your Dwell Time, you can get higher rankings (thanks to RankBrain).

Now you already made your content super in-depth. So there's a good chance your Dwell Time is already solid.

But to seal the deal...

Add some videos to your page. Wistia found that visitors spend 2.6x more time on pages with video.



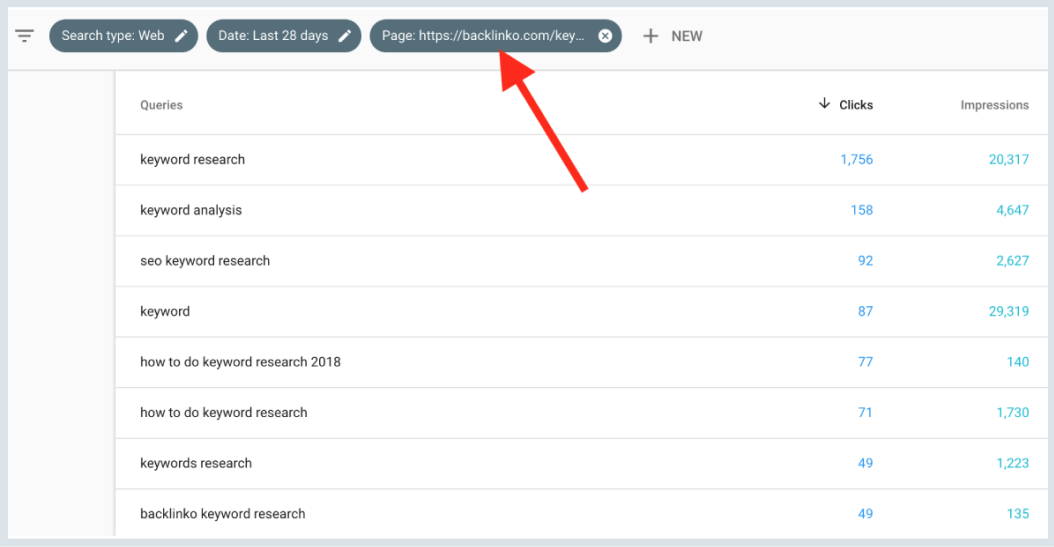
That's a HUGE difference.

So what's the secret?

Well first, you want to make your content SUPER in-depth. We already covered that. But it bears repeating.

Because when you publish meaty content, you rank for hundreds of long tail keywords automatically.

Need a hint on what extra sections to include? Just check what keywords your page is already ranking for in Search Console.



And here's another pro tip: Find the most common questions people ask about your topic. Then, answer them in your content.

The easiest way to find questions: use Answer The Public.

Just type your main keyword into the box...

And you'll get a massive list of questions...

The best part? These answers give you a shot to rank as a Featured Snippet. After all: why rank #1 when you can rank #0?

Find High-Impression Keywords

I already showed you how to optimize keywords that rank 8-20.

But...

I also like to look for keywords that aren't ranking, yet still get some impressions. Here's an example:

Queries	↓ Clicks	Impressions	CTR	Position
build your own skateboard	0	197	0%	50.4

That keyword is sitting at position 50-ish... yet the page was still seen nearly 200 times.

Which tells me: if that many people are visiting the 5th page, wait until I hit the first page.

It's gonna be nuts!

Chapter 4

Cool GSC Features

In this chapter I'm going to show you some of the coolest features in the Google Search Console.

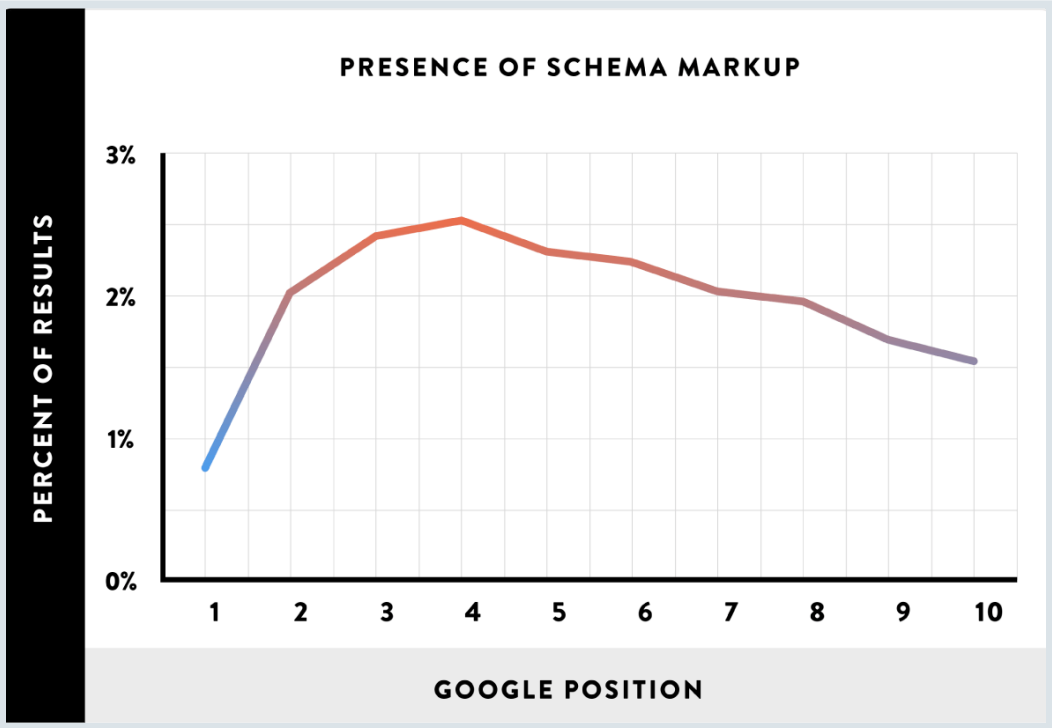
First, I'll teach you how you can use the Search Console to fix your schema.

Then, I'll show you one of the quickest (and EASIEST) wins in SEO.

Nail Your Schema With The Structured Data Testing Tool

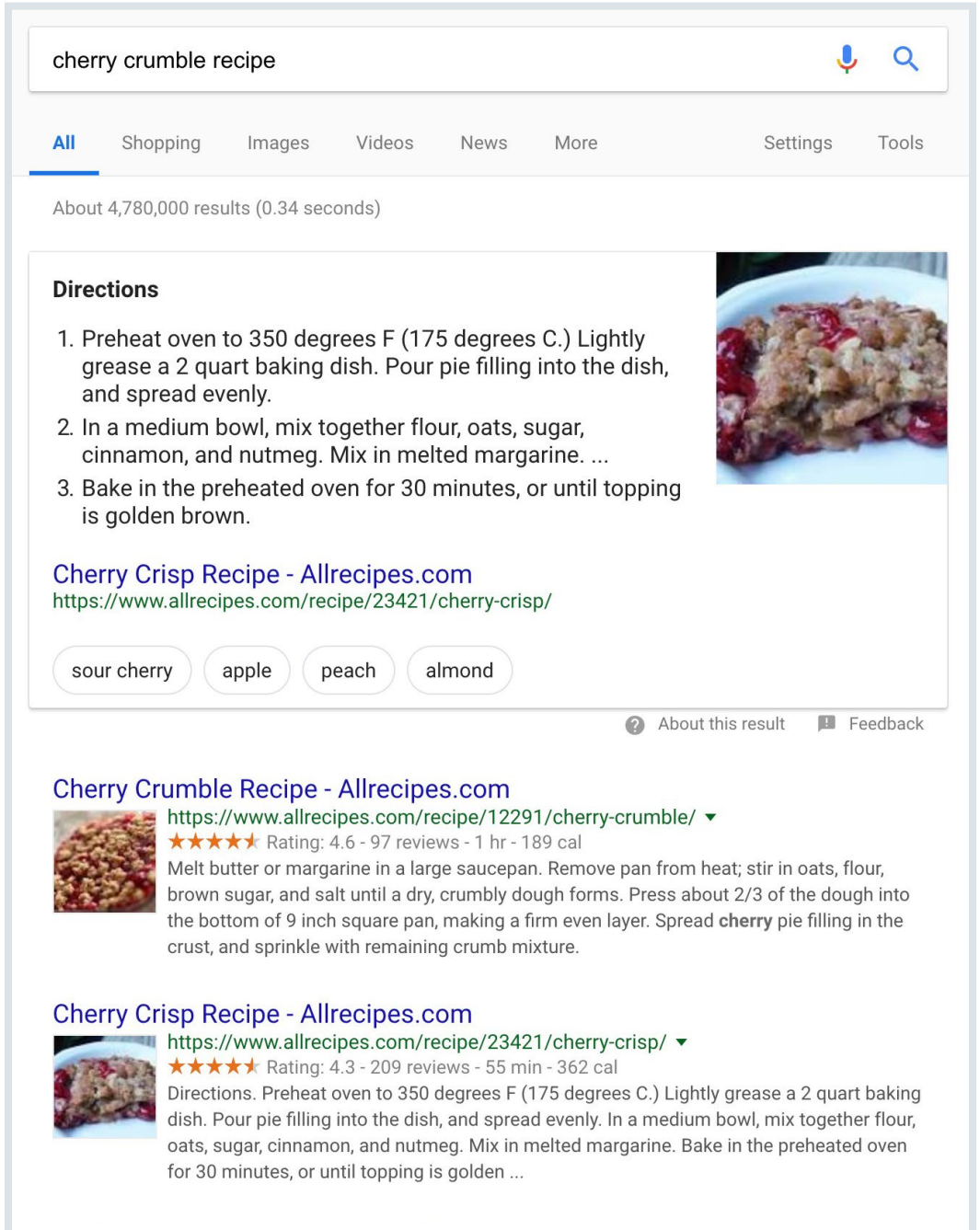
If you're not using Schema markup, you're missing out.

As you might have read, my analysis of 1 million Google search results didn't find any correlation between Schema and rankings.



But that doesn't mean Schema is useless.

Schema can hook you up with sitelinks, star reviews, and recipe images that help your result stand out... and get more clicks.

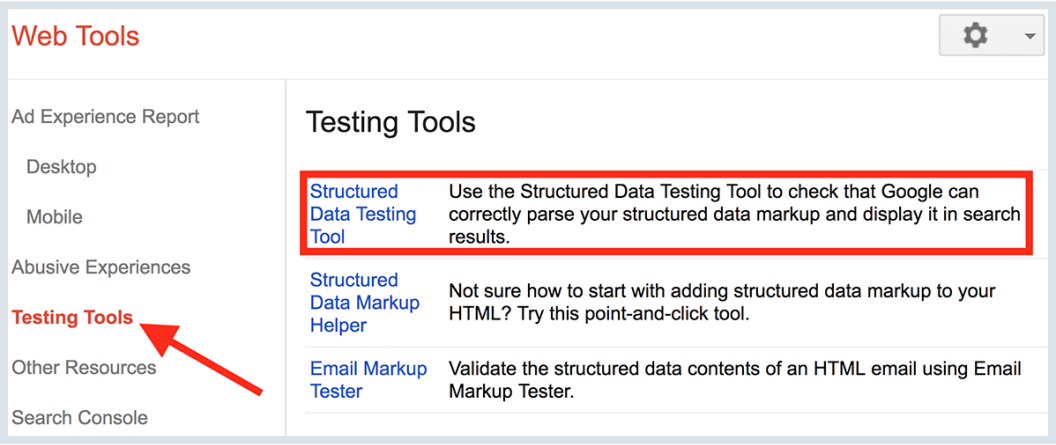


In fact, a recent study by ConversionXL found that review stars can improve CTR by up to 35%. That's INSANE.

It gets better:

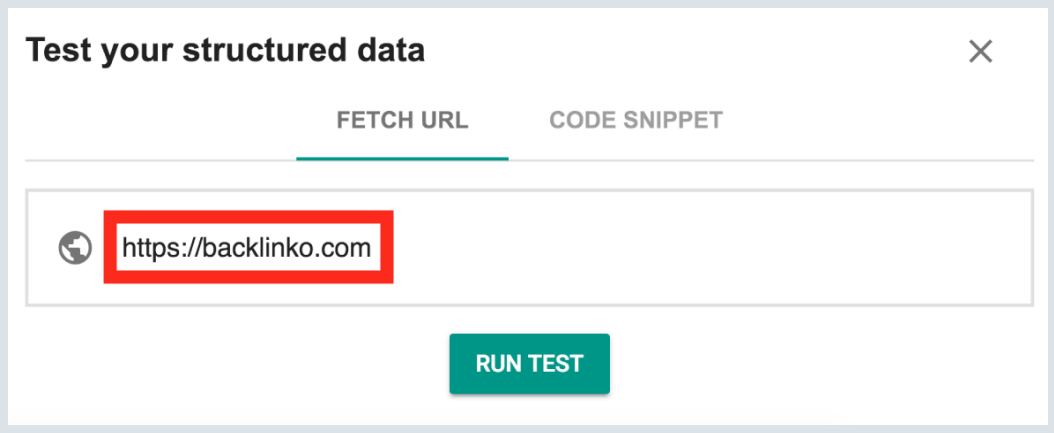
Google has a free tool that makes testing Schema structured data a cinch.

You can access this tool in Search Console. Just click "Web Tools > Testing Tools > Structured Data Testing Tool".

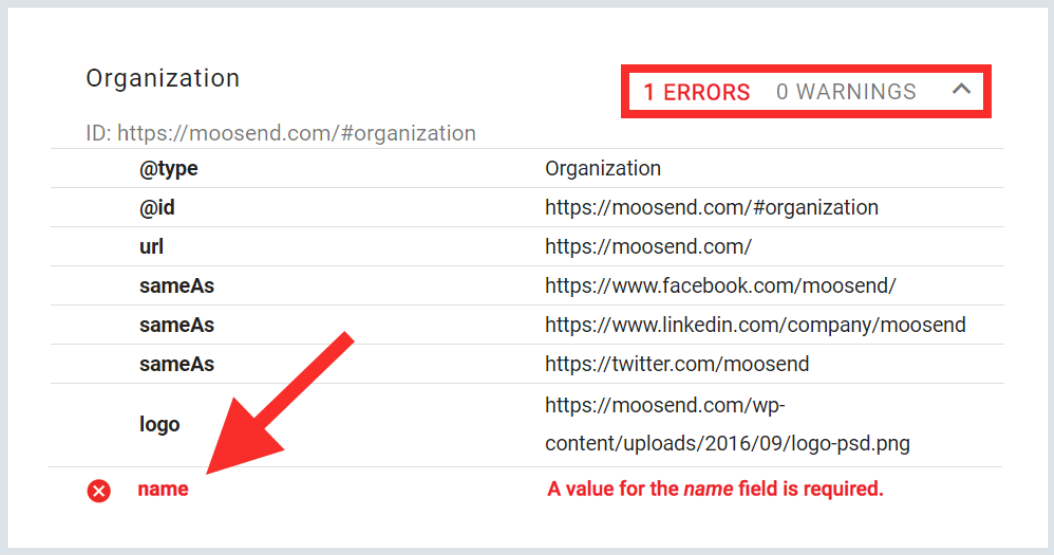


Or if you're already signed in to your Google account, you can click here.

To run a test, just enter a URL into the box and hit “Run Test”:

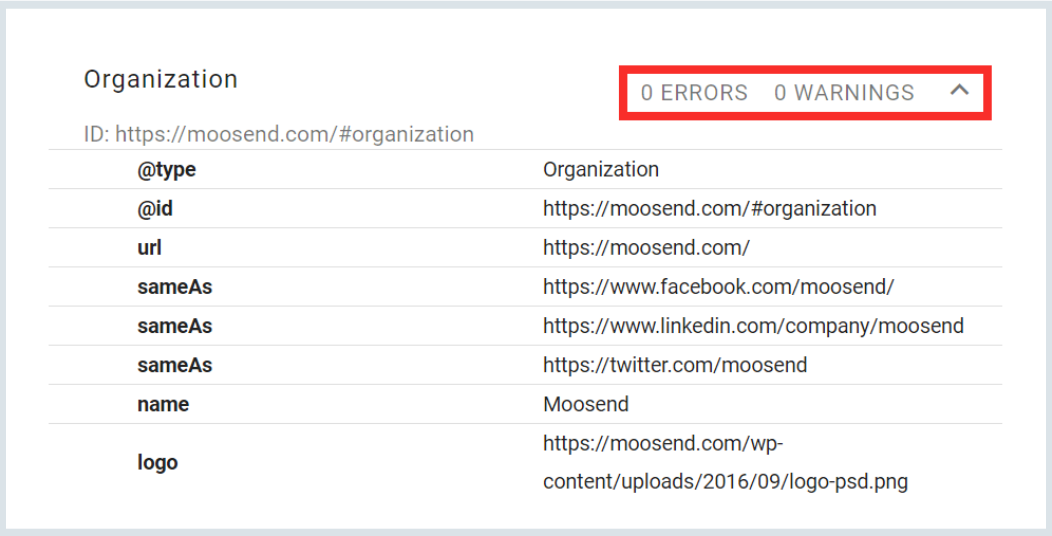


Running this site through the tool highlighted an error in their “Organization” schema:



This one was an easy fix.

All they had to do was add schema markup for “name”...



Organization

0 ERRORS 0 WARNINGS

ID: https://moosend.com/#organization

@type	Organization
@id	https://moosend.com/#organization
url	https://moosend.com/
sameAs	https://www.facebook.com/moosend/
sameAs	https://www.linkedin.com/company/moosend
sameAs	https://twitter.com/moosend
name	Moosend
logo	https://moosend.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/logo-psd.png

... and the errors are gone.

As it turns out, the GSC actually gives us TWO ways to find schema errors.

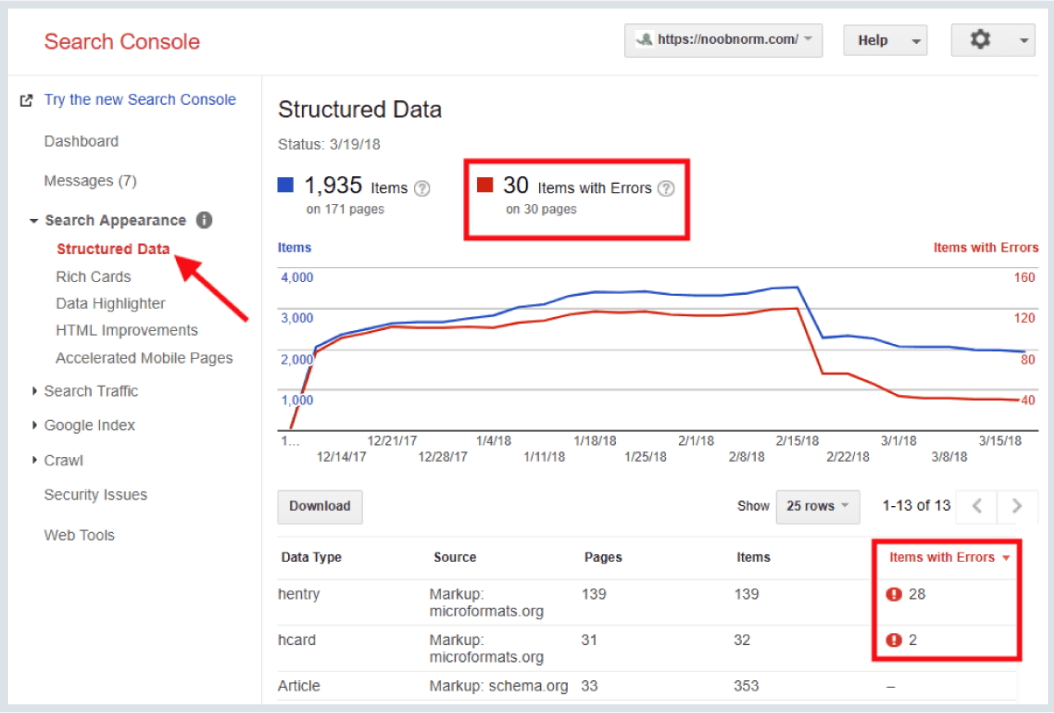
I just showed you the first one.

But I think this second method is even better.

Why?

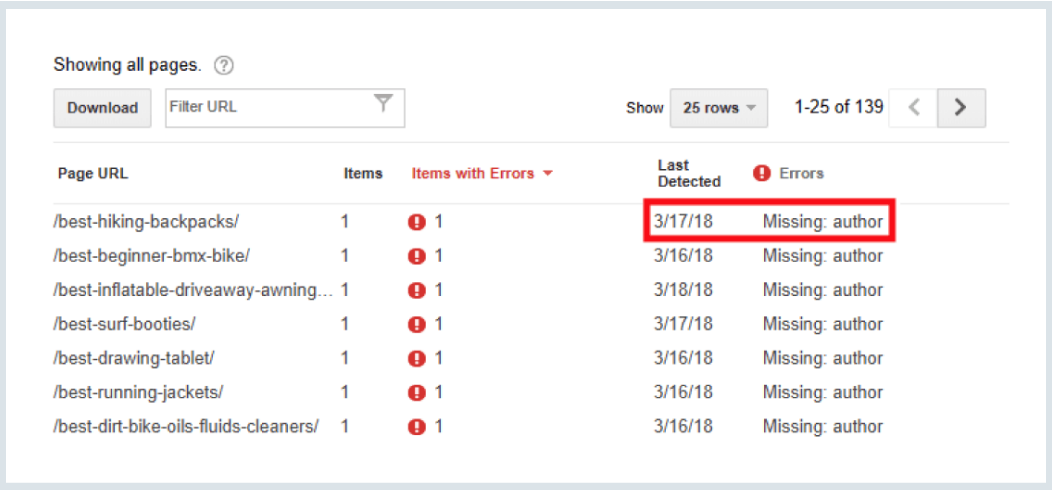
Because it shows you schema errors across your entire site.

For example, here's what you get when you click the "Structured Data" link under "Search Appearance":



We can see that there are "hentry" errors on 28 pages, and "hcard" errors on 2.

Let's click on the hentry errors to see what's up...



Showing all pages.

Download | Filter URL | Show 25 rows | 1-25 of 139

Page URL	Items	Items with Errors	Last Detected	Errors
/best-hiking-backpacks/	1	1	3/17/18	Missing: author
/best-beginner-bmx-bike/	1	1	3/16/18	Missing: author
/best-inflatable-driveaway-awning...	1	1	3/18/18	Missing: author
/best-surf-booties/	1	1	3/17/18	Missing: author
/best-drawing-tablet/	1	1	3/16/18	Missing: author
/best-running-jackets/	1	1	3/16/18	Missing: author
/best-dirt-bike-oils-fluids-cleaners/	1	1	3/16/18	Missing: author

Looks like we're missing schema for "author". Here's the fix.

Missing: author

To temporarily fix this issue for the author tag, please follow these steps:

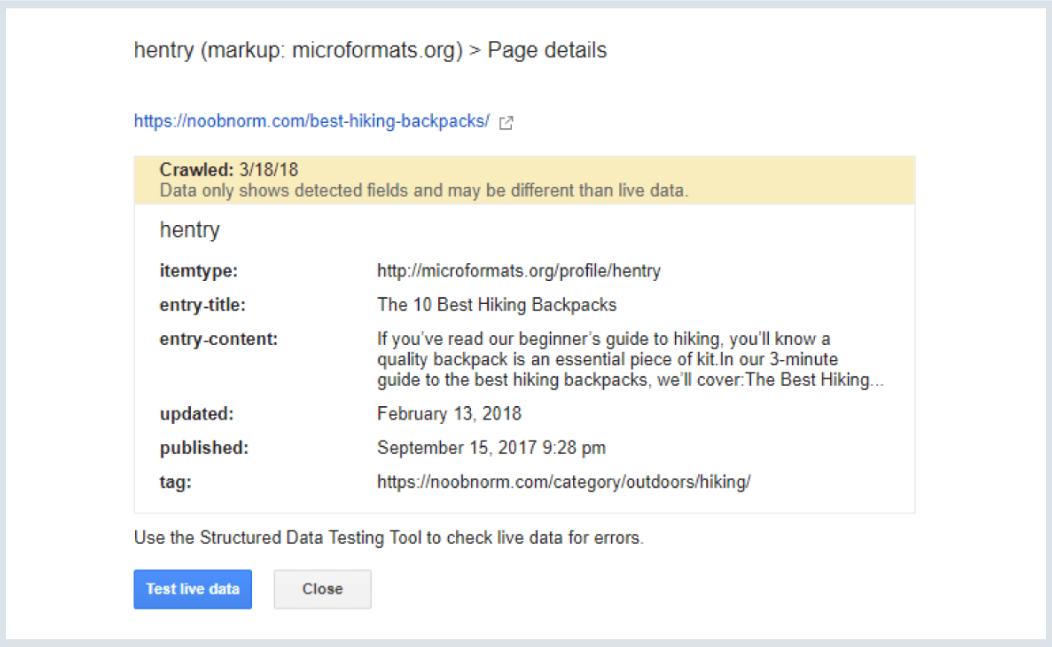
1. Locate the call to `the_author();` in your theme's single.php file, it might look something like this:

```
<span class="author_name"><?php the_author(); ?></span>
```

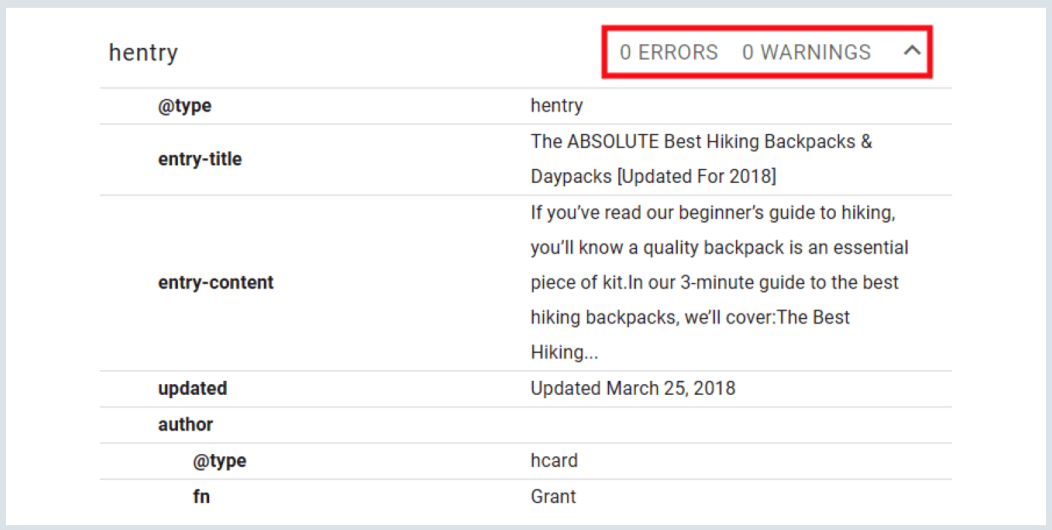
2. Change it so that it has a class `vcard author` and within that another element with a class `fn`. The example above would become something like this:

```
<span class="vcard author author_name"><span class="fn"><?php the_
```

Did it work? To find out, hit the blue “Test live data” button.



Which takes you back to the Structured Data Testing Tool. As you can see, it worked like a charm!



Power Up Important Pages With Internal Links

Make no mistake:

Internal links are SUPER powerful.

Unfortunately, most people use internal linking all wrong.

That's the bad news.

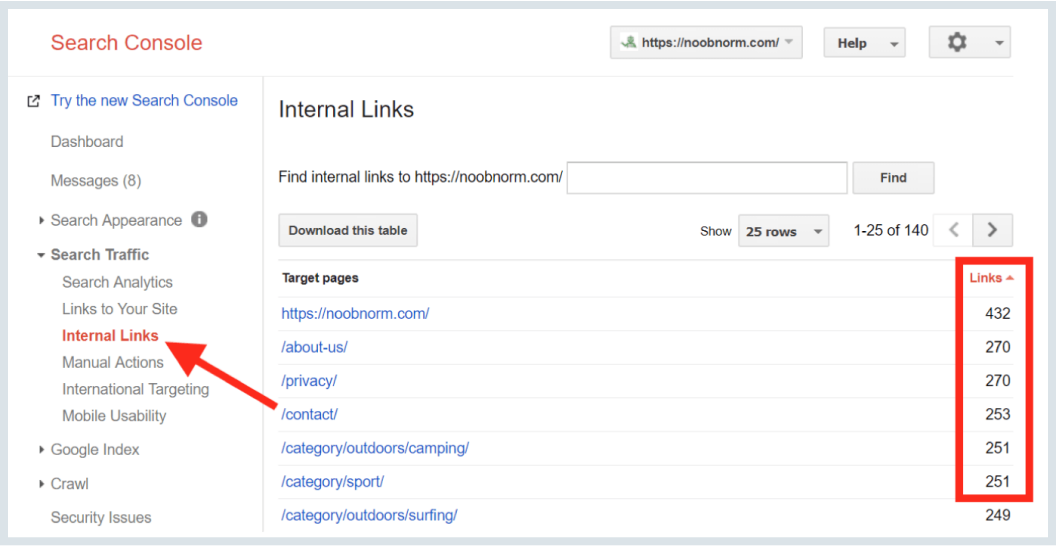
The good news?

The Search Console has an awesome feature designed to help you overcome this problem.

This report shows you the EXACT pages that need some internal link love.

To access this report, hit "Internal Links" in the GSC sidebar.

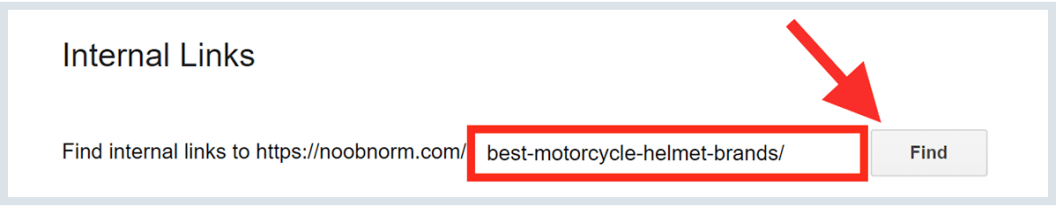
And you'll get a report that shows you the number of internal links pointing to every page on your site.



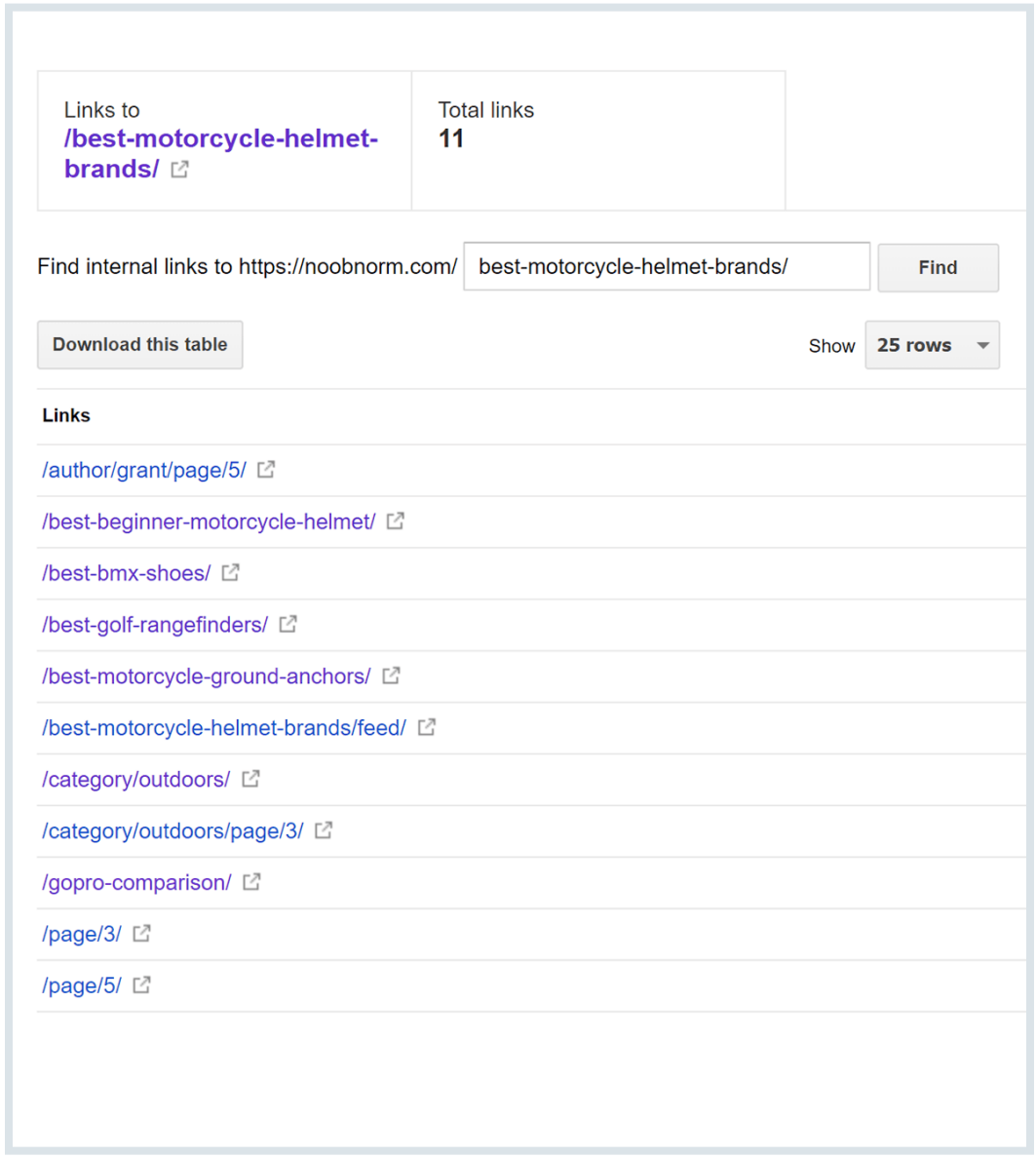
This report is already a goldmine.

But it gets better...

You can find the EXACT pages that internally link to a specific page. Just grab a URL and paste it here:



And you'll get a list of all the internal links pointing to that page:



Links to
/best-motorcycle-helmet-brands/

Total links
11

Find internal links to https://noobnorm.com/ best-motorcycle-helmet-brands/ Find

Download this table

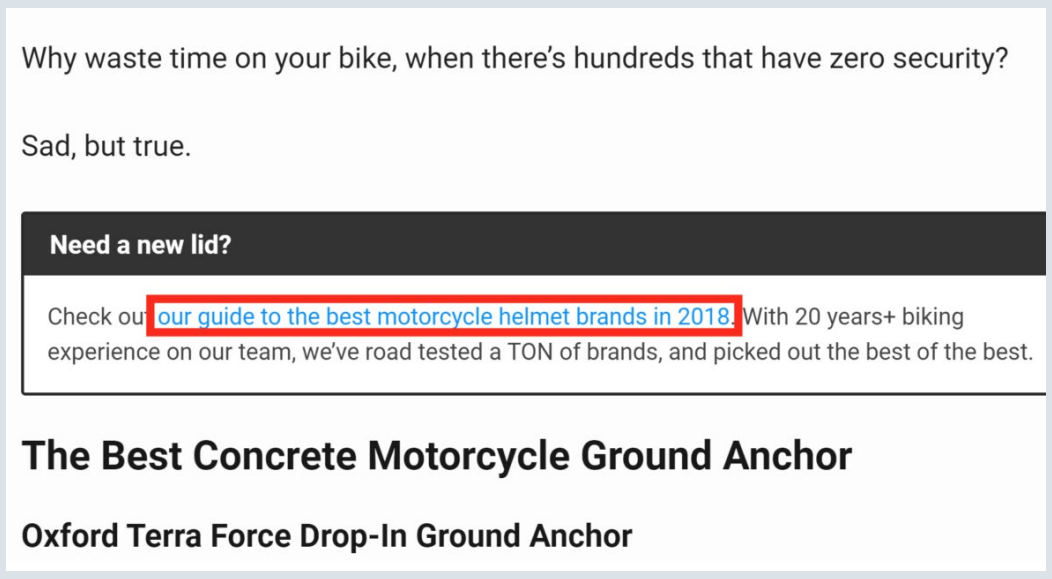
Show **25 rows**

Links
/author/grant/page/5/
/best-beginner-motorcycle-helmet/
/best-bmx-shoes/
/best-golf-rangefinders/
/best-motorcycle-ground-anchors/
/best-motorcycle-helmet-brands/feed/
/category/outdoors/
/category/outdoors/page/3/
/gopro-comparison/
/page/3/
/page/5/

In this case, we only have 11 internal links pointing to this motorcycle helmet brands page. That's not good.

So:

Once you find a page that doesn't have enough internal links juice, add some internal links that point to that page.



Time spent: under a minute.

Assessment: Win!

Pro Tip: Supercharge Key Posts With Internal Links From Powerhouse Pages

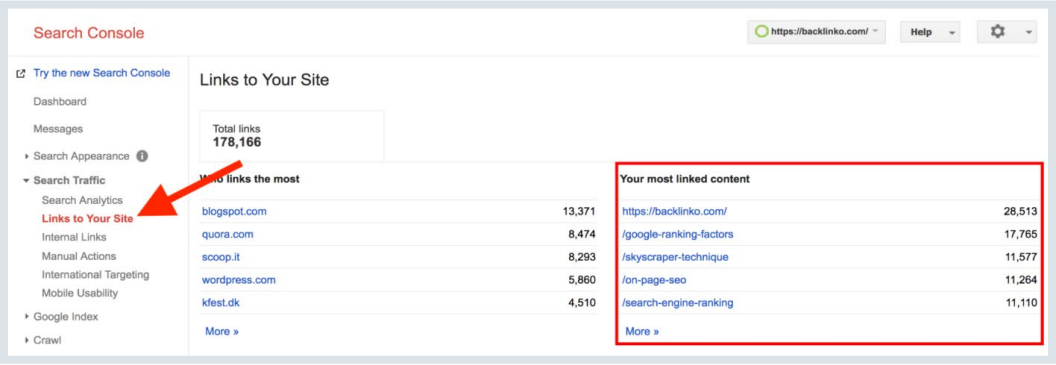
What's a Powerhouse Page?

It's a page on your site with lots of quality backlinks.

More backlinks = more link juice to pass on through internal links.

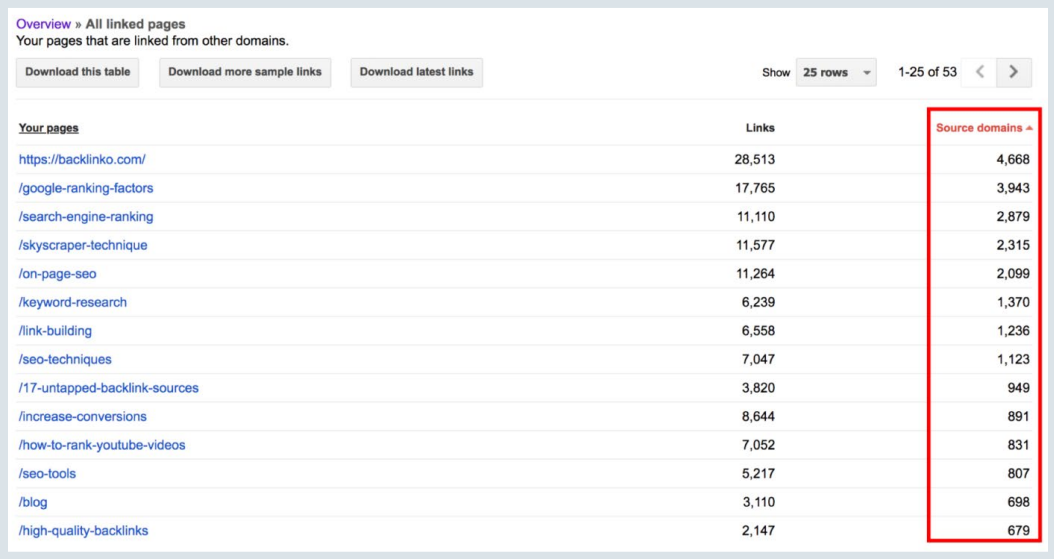
You can easily find Powerhouse Pages in the Google Search Console.

Just hit the "Links To Your Site" link. And you'll see a section titled "Your most linked content".



Click “More” for a full list.

By default, the report is ordered by the total number of backlinks. But I prefer to sort by number of source domains:



Overview » All linked pages
Your pages that are linked from other domains.

Download this table | Download more sample links | Download latest links | Show 25 rows | 1-25 of 53

Your pages	Links	Source domains
https://backlinko.com/	28,513	4,668
/google-ranking-factors	17,765	3,943
/search-engine-ranking	11,110	2,879
/skyscraper-technique	11,577	2,315
/on-page-seo	11,264	2,099
/keyword-research	6,239	1,370
/link-building	6,558	1,236
/seo-techniques	7,047	1,123
/17-untapped-backlink-sources	3,820	949
/increase-conversions	8,644	891
/how-to-rank-youtube-videos	7,052	831
/seo-tools	5,217	807
/blog	3,110	698
/high-quality-backlinks	2,147	679

These are your Powerhouse Pages.

And all you need to do is add some internal links FROM those pages TO the ones you want to boost.

Easy, right?

Chapter 5

Advanced Tips and Strategies

Now it's time for some advanced tips and strategies.

In this chapter you'll learn how to use Google Search Console to optimize crawl budget, fix issues with mobile usability, and improve your mobile CTR.

Mastering Crawl Stats & Crawl Budget

If you have a small site (<1,000 pages), you probably don't need to worry about crawl stats.

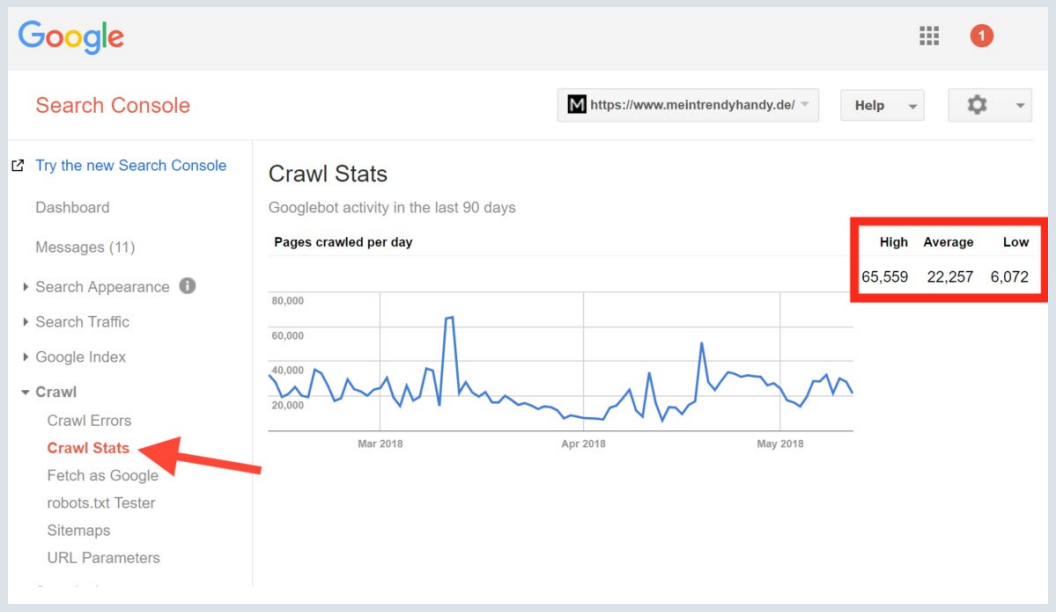
But if you have a huge site... that's a different story.

In that case, it's worth looking into your crawl budget.

What Is Crawl Budget?

Your Crawl Budget is the number of pages on your site that Google crawls every day.

You can see this number in the "Crawl Stats" report.



In this case, Google crawls an average of 22,257 pages per day. So that's this site's Crawl Budget.

Why Is Crawl Budget Important For SEO?

Say you have:

200,000 pages on your website
and
A crawl budget of 2,000 pages per day

It could take Google 100 days to crawl your site.

So if you change something on one of your pages, it might take MONTHS before Google processes the change.

Or, if you add a new page to your site, Google's going to take forever to index it.

So what can you do to get the most out of your Crawl Budget?

Three things...

#1: First, stop wasting Crawl Budget on unnecessary pages

This is a biggie for Ecommerce sites.

Most ecommerce sites let their users filter through products... and search for things.

This is great for sales.

But if you're not careful, you can find yourself with THOUSANDS of extra pages that look like this:

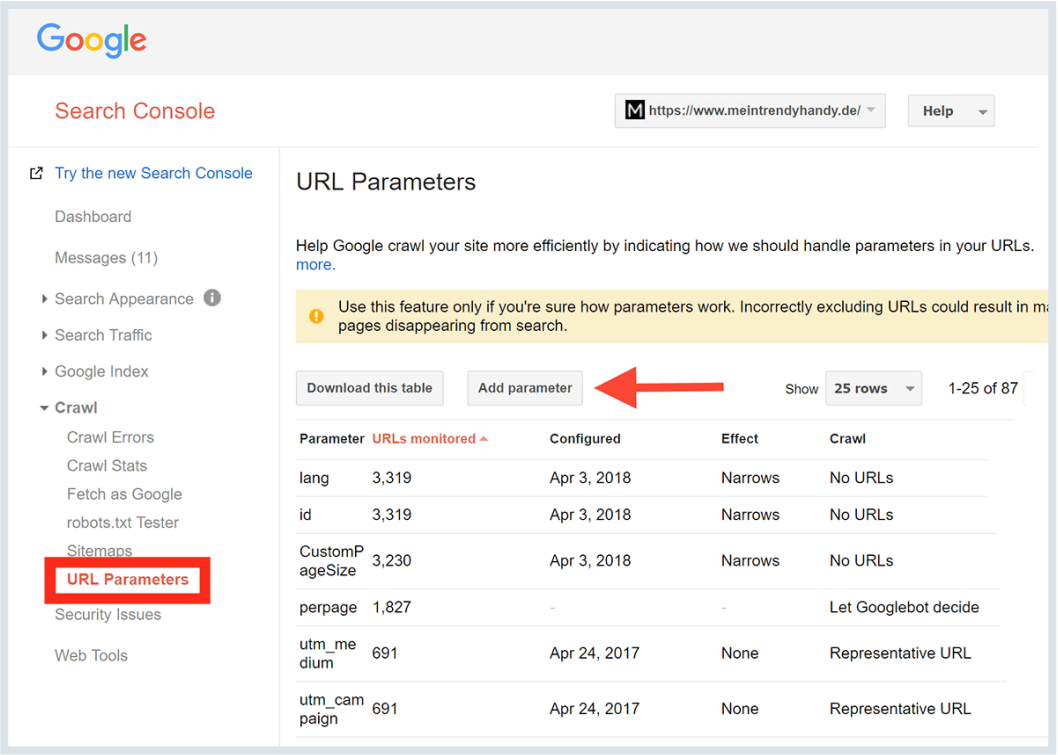
yourstore.com/product-category/?size=small&orderby=price&color=green...

Unless you take action, Google will happily waste your crawl budget on these junk pages.

What's the solution?

URL Parameters.

To set these up, click the "URL Parameters" link. Then hit "Add Parameter".

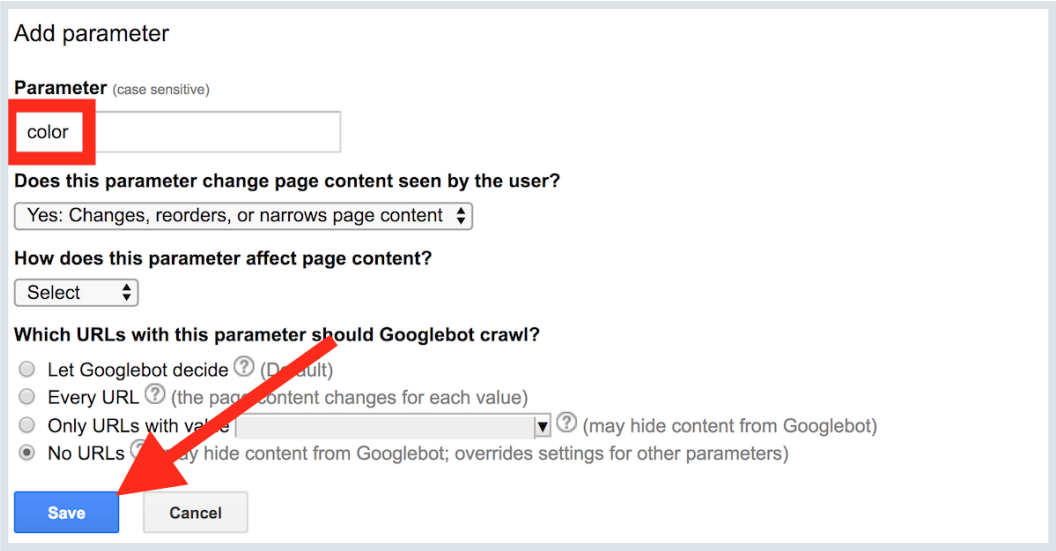


Let's say that you let users filter products by color. And each color has its own URL.

For example, the color URLs look like this:

yourstore.com/product-category/?color=red

You can easily tell Google not to crawl any URLs with that color parameter:

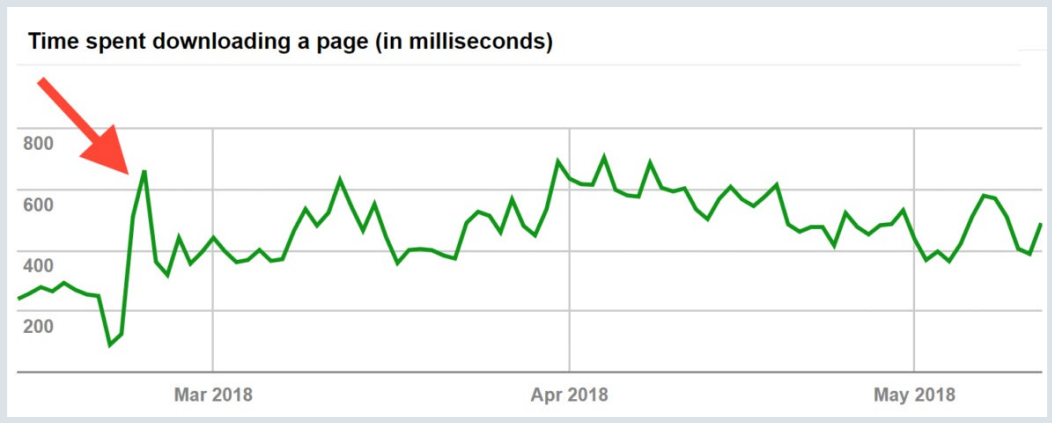


Repeat this for ALL parameters you don't want Google to crawl.

And if you're somewhat new to SEO, check in with an SEO specialist to make sure this is implement correctly. When it comes to parameters, it's easy to do more harm than good!

#2: See how long it takes Google to download your page

The crawl report in Search Console shows you the average time it takes Google to download your pages:



See that spike? It means that it suddenly took Google A LOT longer to download everything. And this can KILL your Crawl Budget.

In fact, we have this quote straight from the horse's mouth... In a Google Webmaster Central blog post, Googler Gary Illyes explained:

"Making a site faster improves the users' experience while also increasing crawl rate. For Googlebot a speedy site is a sign of healthy servers, so it can get more content over the same number of connections. On the flip side, a significant number of 5xx errors or connection timeouts signal the opposite, and crawling slows down."

Bottom line? Make sure your site loads SUPER fast. You already know that this can help your rankings.

As it turns out, a fast-loading site squeezes more out of your crawl budget too.

#3: Get more backlinks to your site

As if backlinks couldn't be any more awesome, it turns out that they also help with your crawl budget.

In an interview with Eric Enge of Stone Temple Consulting, Matt Cutts said:

"The best way to think about it is that the number of pages that we crawl is roughly proportional to your PageRank. So if you have a lot of incoming links on your root page, we'll definitely crawl that. Then your root page may link to other pages, and those will get PageRank and we'll crawl those as well. As you get deeper and deeper in your site, however, PageRank tends to decline."

The takeaway:

More backlinks = bigger crawl budget.

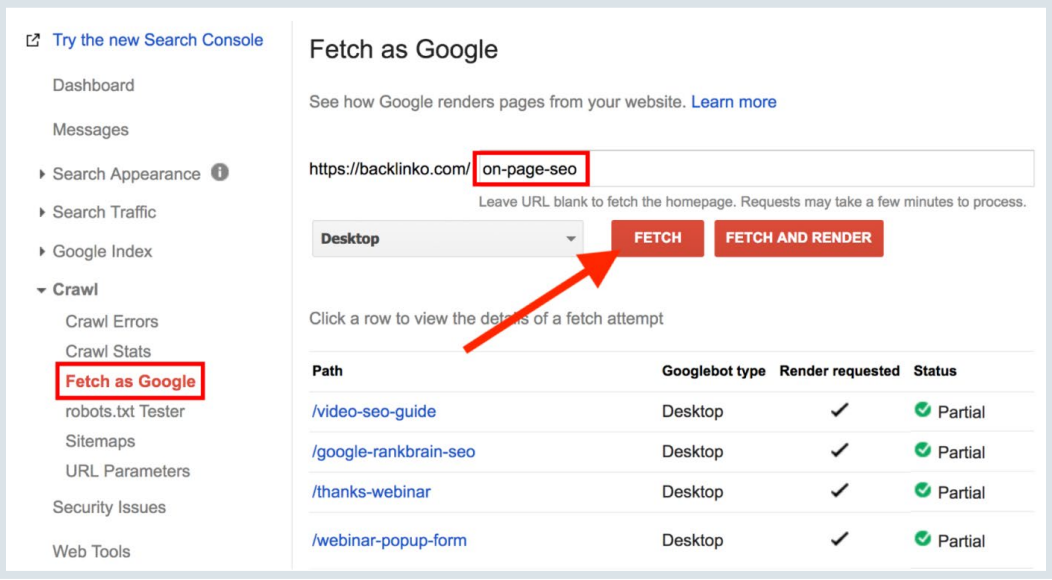
Get The Most Out of "Fetch As Google"

I already covered the "Fetch As Google" tool in Chapter 3.

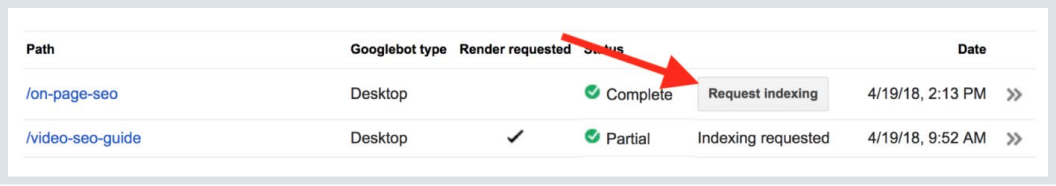
But that was one part of a big process. So let's take a look at Fetch As Google as a standalone tool. Specifically, I'm going to show you 3 cool things you can do with the Fetch As Google tool.

#1: Get new content indexed (in minutes)

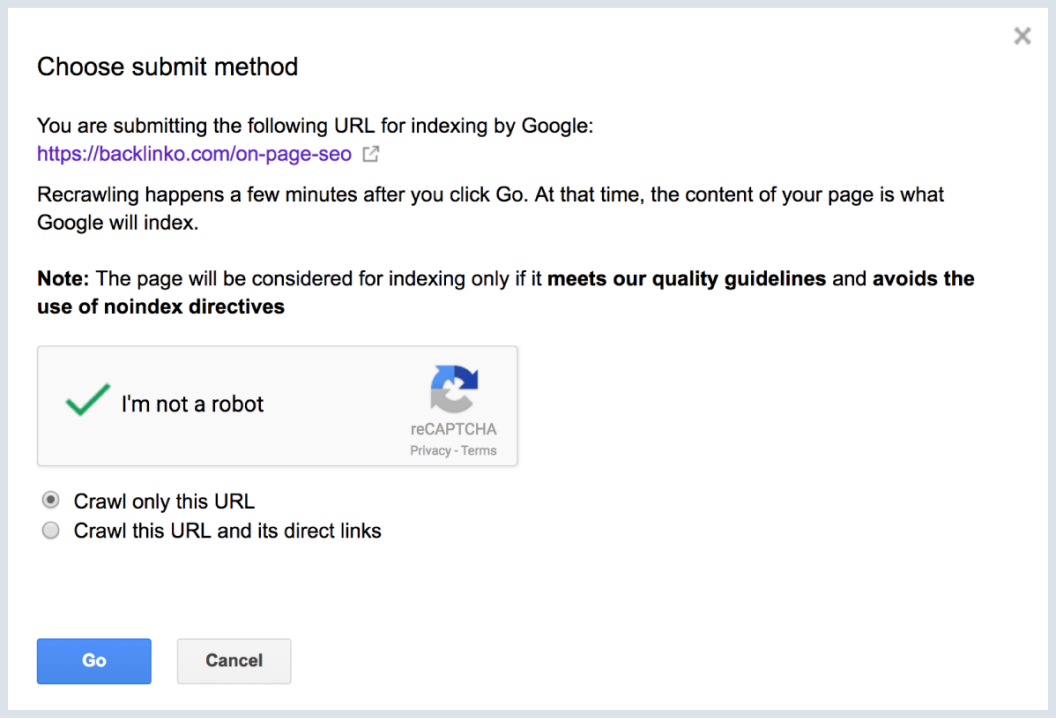
Fetch As Google is the FASTEST way to get new pages indexed. Just published a new page? Just pop the URL into the box and hit "Fetch".



Next, hit “Request indexing” to send Googlebot to that page.



Finally, choose “Crawl only this URL” and hit “Go”...

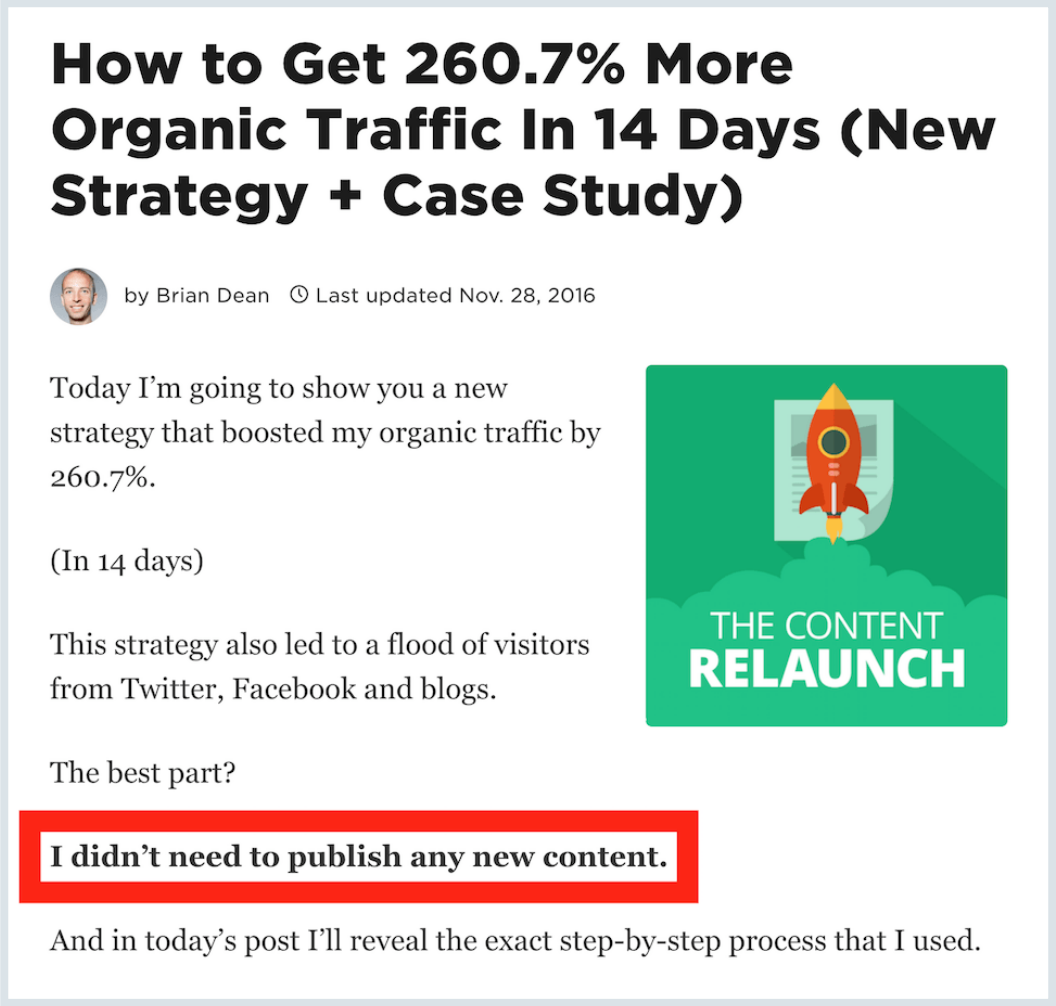


...and Google will normally index your page within a few minutes.

#2: Use “Fetch as Google” to reindex updated content

If you’re a regular Backlinko reader, you know that I LOVE updating old content. I do it to keep my content fresh. But I also do it because it increases organic traffic (FAST).

For example, in this case study, I reveal how relaunching an old post got me 260.7% more organic traffic in just 14 days.



How to Get 260.7% More Organic Traffic In 14 Days (New Strategy + Case Study)

by Brian Dean Last updated Nov. 28, 2016

Today I’m going to show you a new strategy that boosted my organic traffic by 260.7%.

(In 14 days)

This strategy also led to a flood of visitors from Twitter, Facebook and blogs.

The best part?

I didn’t need to publish any new content.

And in today’s post I’ll reveal the exact step-by-step process that I used.

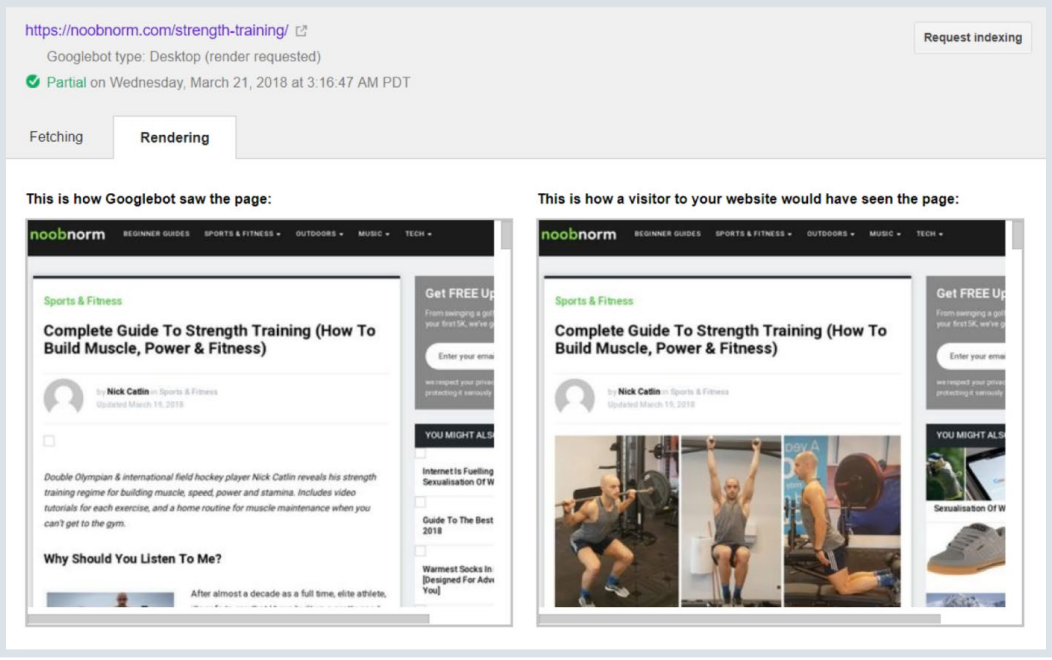
And you better believe I always use the “Fetch As Google” tool to get my new content indexed ASAP. Otherwise, I have to wait around for Google to recrawl the page on its own. As Sweet Brown famously said: “Ain’t nobody got time for that!”.

#3: Identify Problems With Rendering

So what else can the “Fetch As Google” tool do?

“Fetch And Render” shows you how Google and users see your page. And because it shows them side-by-side, you can EASILY spot differences.

In this case...



...Houston, we have a problem!

Looks like Googlebot can't load some of the images on that page.

What's going on here?

Well, I scrolled down to the bottom of the report. And it looks like the images were temporarily unreachable.

Googlebot couldn't get all resources for this page. Here's a list:

URL	Type	Reason	Severity
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/olympic-rings-photo-164x99.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://www.google-analytics.com/collect?v=1&_v=j66&a=1866784098&t=pageview&_s=1&dl=https%3A%2F%2Fnoobnorm.com%2Fstrength-training%2F&ul=en-us&de=UTF-8&dt=Complete%20Guide%20To%20Strength%20Training%20(Build%20Muscle%2C%20Power%20%26%20Fitness)&sd=24-bit&sr=1024x768&vp=1024x768&je=0&_u=aGBAgUAjC~&jid=736327293&gjid=203875879&cid=1337952572.1521627647&tid=UA-103545381-1&_gid=1934583160.1521627647&z=479888047	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://stats.g.doubleclick.net/r/collect?t=dc&aip=1&_r=3&v=1&_v=j66&tid=UA-103545381-1&cid=1337952572.1521627647&jid=736327293&gjid=203875879&_gid=1934583160.1521627647&_u=aGBAgUAjC~&z=1268652245	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/full-body-workout-1024x538.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Gym-article-240x300.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/nuzest-banner.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/females-sport-197x133.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/warmest-socks-cold-197x133.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/olympic-rings-photo-197x133.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--
https://noobnorm.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/best-bmx-shoes-164x99.jpg	Image	Temporarily unreachable	--

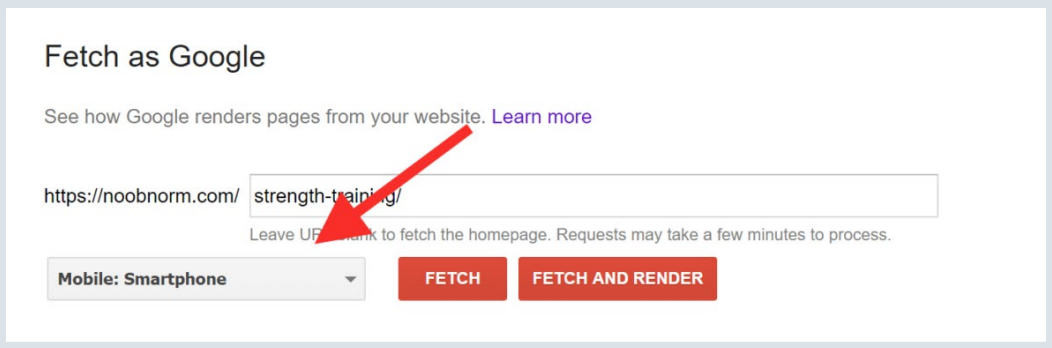
Maybe it was a fluke.

So I went ahead and ran the "Fetch And Render" again.

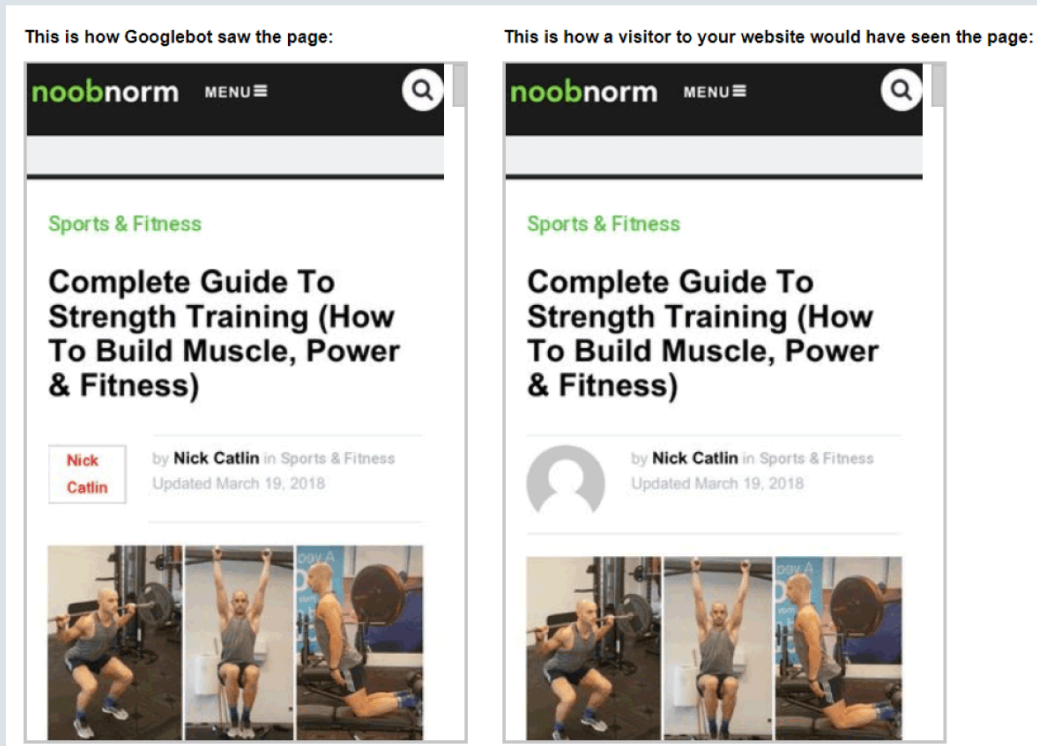
And Google still couldn't access those images. Hmmm.

Next, I wanted to see if I got the same problem if I fetched using Google's mobile crawler.

To do that, choose "Mobile: Smartphone" here.



So what happened?

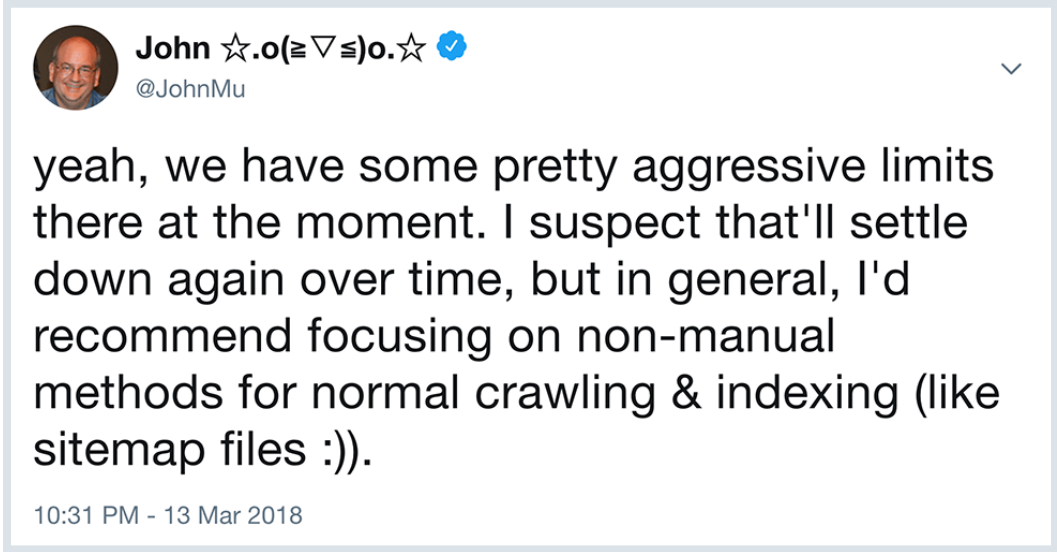


That's better. Now, I should point something out:

Google recently updated their guidelines for the Fetch as Google tool. Back in the day you got unlimited single URL submissions. You also got up to 10 URL + "crawl this URL and its direct links" page submissions a day. Today, you only get 10 individual URLs and 2 site recrawls.

- **Crawl only this URL** submits only the selected URL to the Google for re-crawling. You can submit up to 10 individual URLs per day.
- Select **Crawl this URL and its direct links** to submit the URL as well as all the other pages that URL links to directly for re-crawling. You can submit up to 2 of these site recrawl requests per day.

Google's John Mueller stated on Twitter that they are setting "Pretty aggressive limits" on this feature.

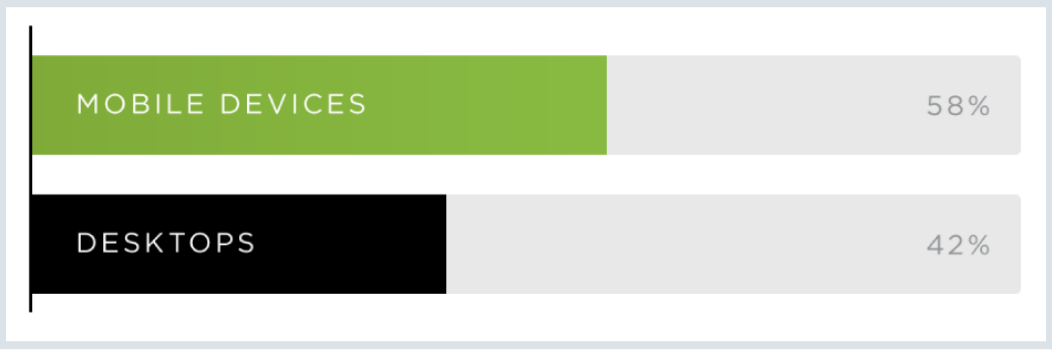


So use it... don't abuse it!

Make Sure Your Site Is Optimized For Mobile (Unless You Like Losing Traffic)

As you might have heard, more people are searching with their mobile devices than with desktops.

(And this gap is increasing every day)



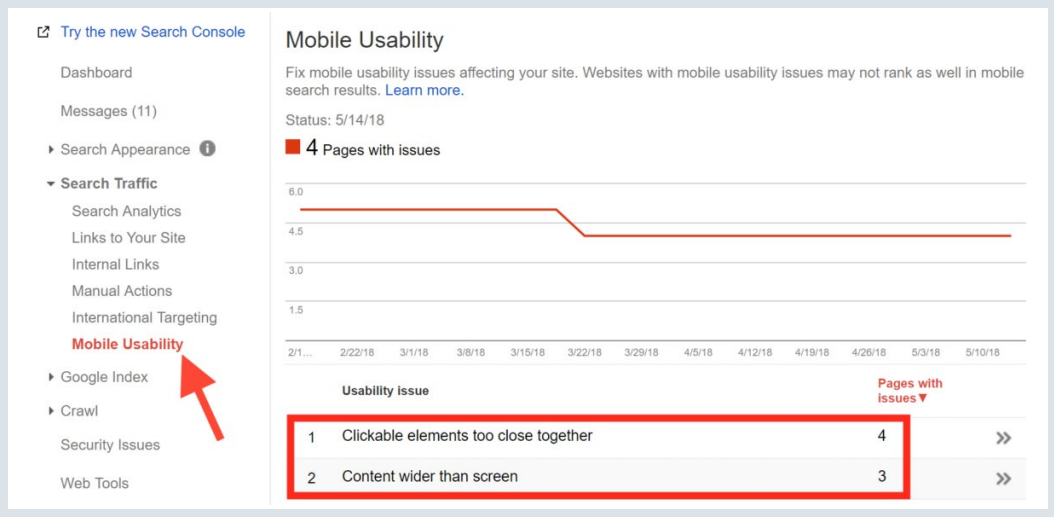
And Google's "Mobile-First" index means that Google only cares about the mobile version of your site.

Bottom line? Your site's content and UX has to be 100% optimized for mobile.

But how do you know if Google considers your site mobile optimized?

Well, the Google Search Console has an excellent report called "Mobile Usability". This report tells you if mobile users have trouble using your site.

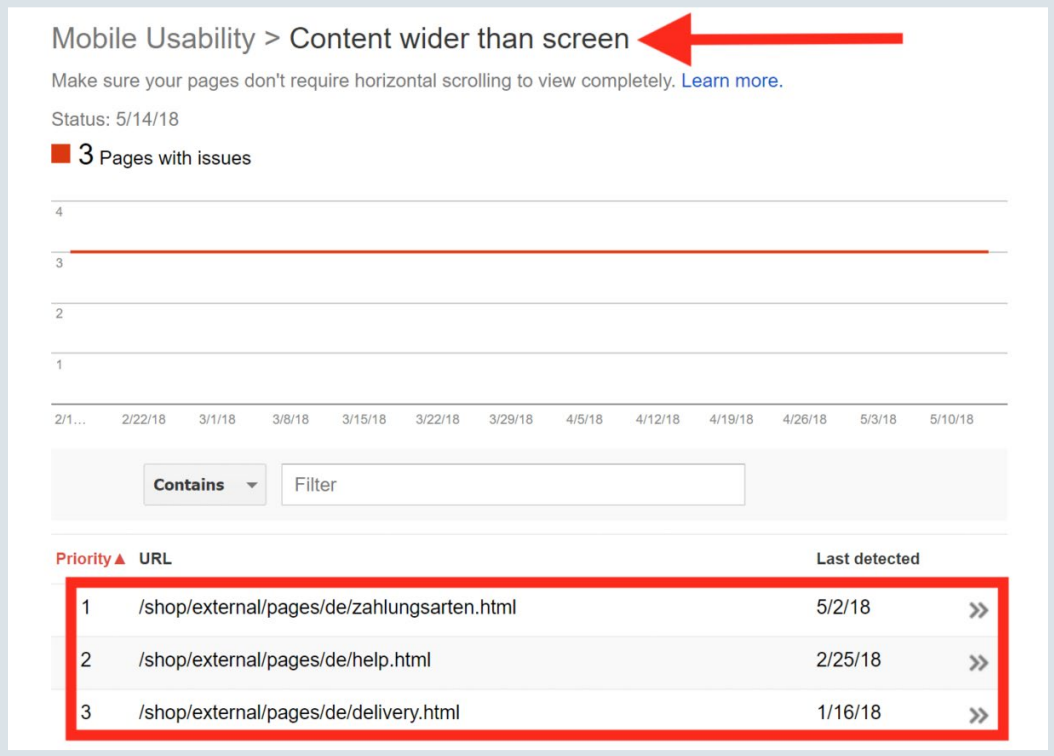
Here's an example:



As you can see, the report is telling us about two mobile usability issues: "Content wider than screen" and "Clickable elements too close together".

All you need to do is click on one of the issues. And the GSC will show you:

1. Pages with this issue
2. How to fix the problem



Then, it's just a matter of taking care of that issue.

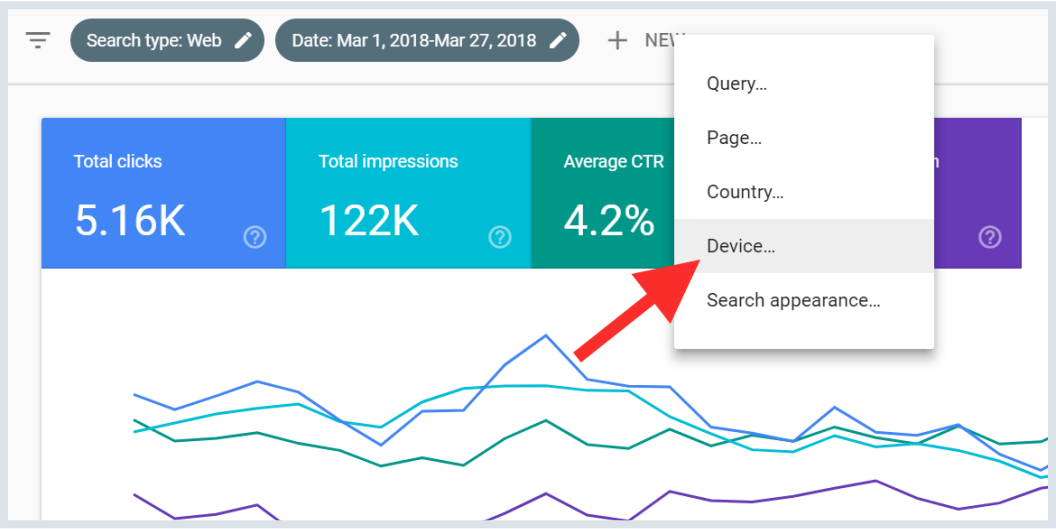
And if you need more help optimizing your site for mobile users, make sure to read my guide to mobile optimization.

Compare Your CTR On Desktop and Mobile

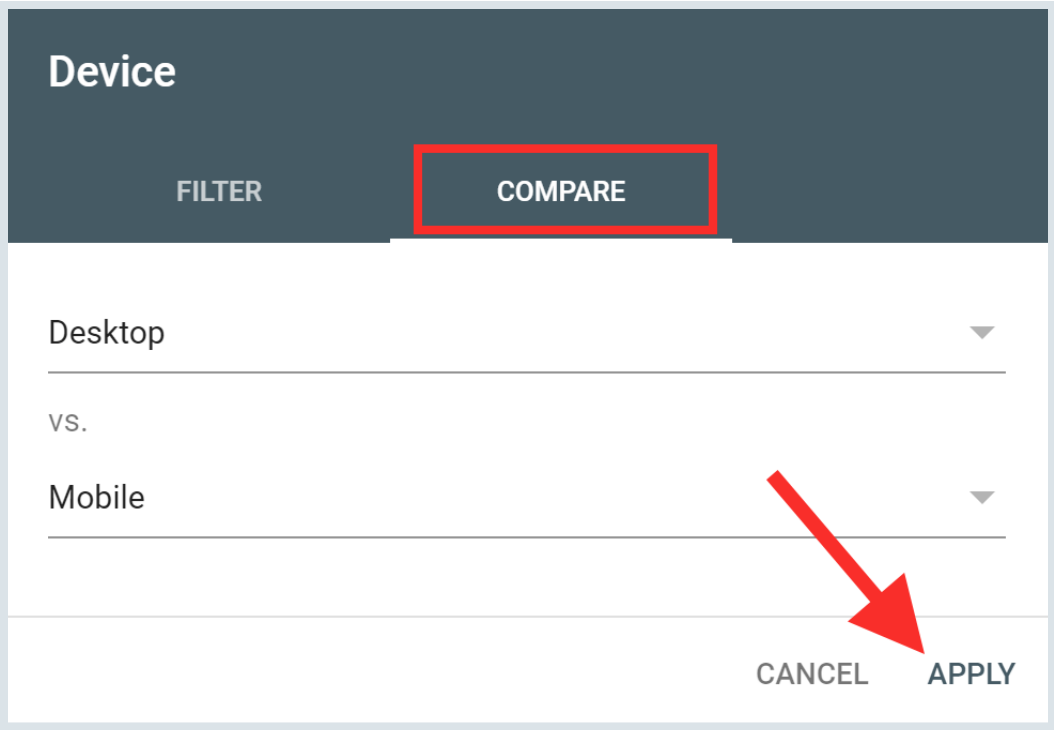
The new Performance report lets you easily compare mobile and desktop CTR.

Here's how:

Fire up the Performance report. Then, hit "New+" to add a new filter, and select "Device"...



Click the compare tab on the popup, select "Desktop vs Mobile", and hit apply...



You'll get a list of queries, with separate stats for mobile and desktop.

Queries	Desktop Impressions	Mobile Impressions	Desktop CTR	Mobile CTR	Desktop Position	Mobile Position
best skateboard decks	5,365	7,484	5.2%	5.6%	8.3	7.8
best ski goggles under 50	859	1,172	31.7%	19.9%	2.8	2.7
gopro comparison chart 2018	571	469	39.9%	44.1%	1.8	1.6

Of course, it's normal for mobile and desktop CTRs to be a little bit different.

But if you see a BIG difference, it could be that your title and description tags don't appeal to mobile searchers.

And that's something you'd want to fix.

Want more actionable SEO content like this? Then make sure to subscribe to my YouTube channel right now.

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