SEO tips and tools for local businesses

By Ann Stanley

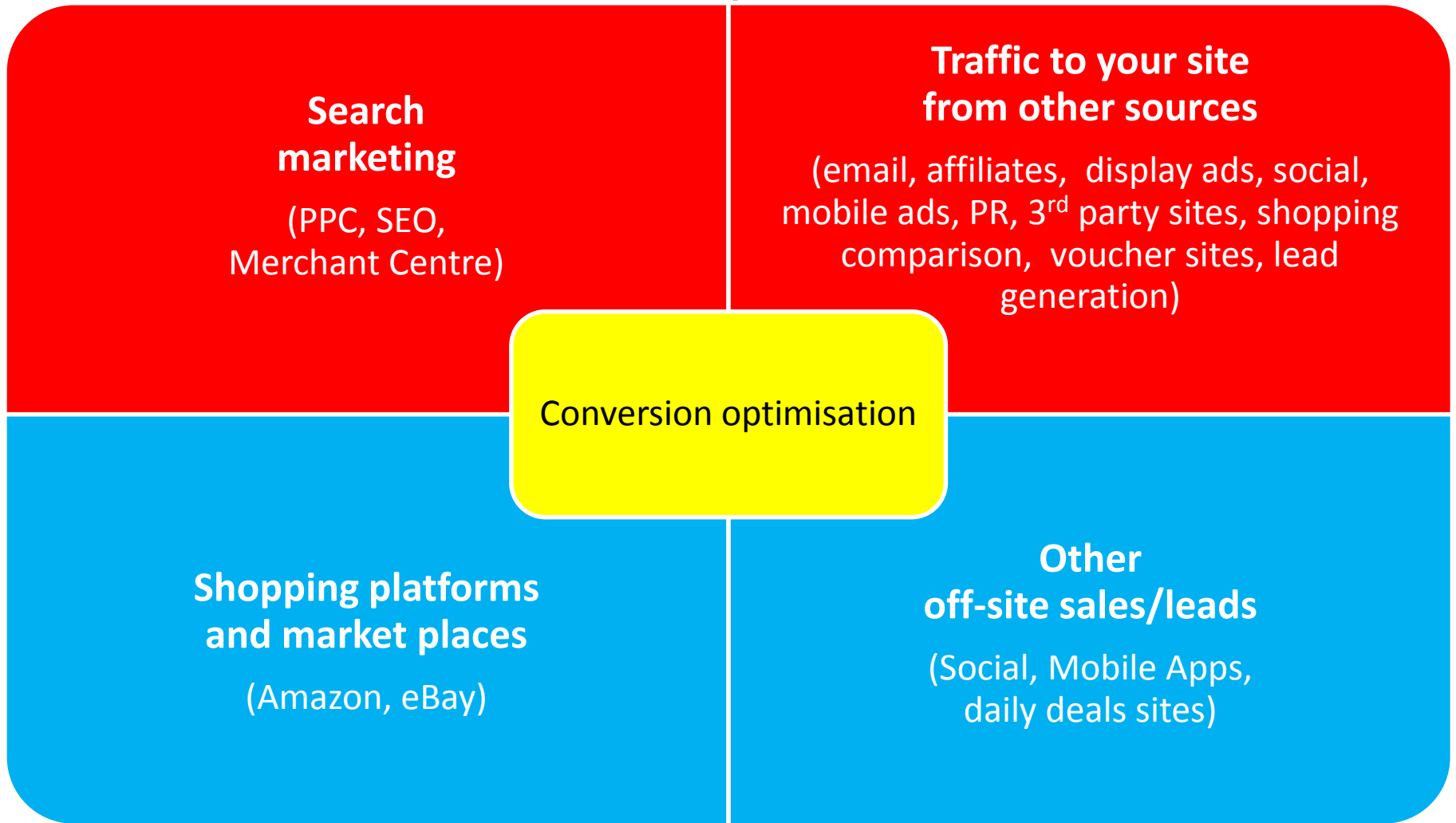Managing Director of Anicca Digital

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2. Maximising your visibility in the local Google search results
3. Understanding Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) - a beginners' guide
4. Recent changes to the Google algorithm and how to avoid getting a Google penalty
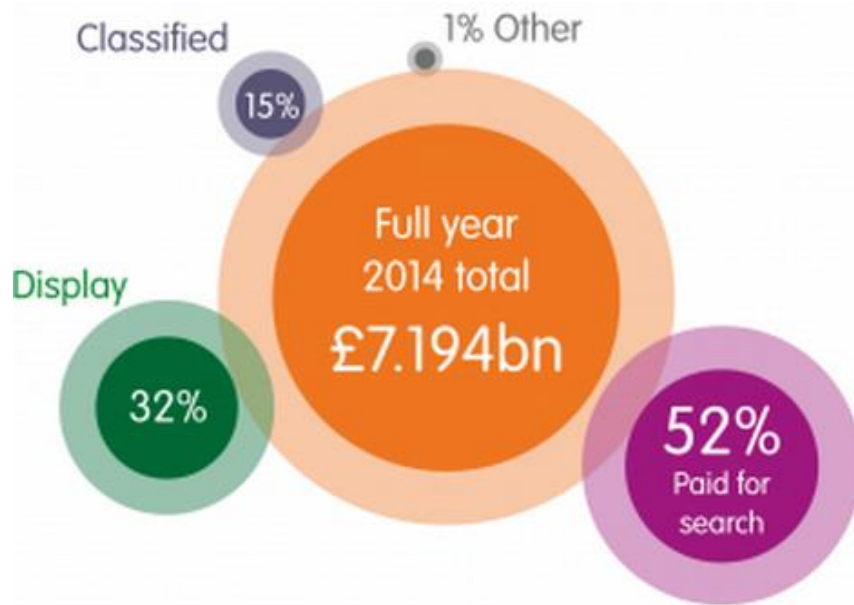5. Essential tools and techniques to help you carry out your own SEO

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1: The Digital Marketing Landscape
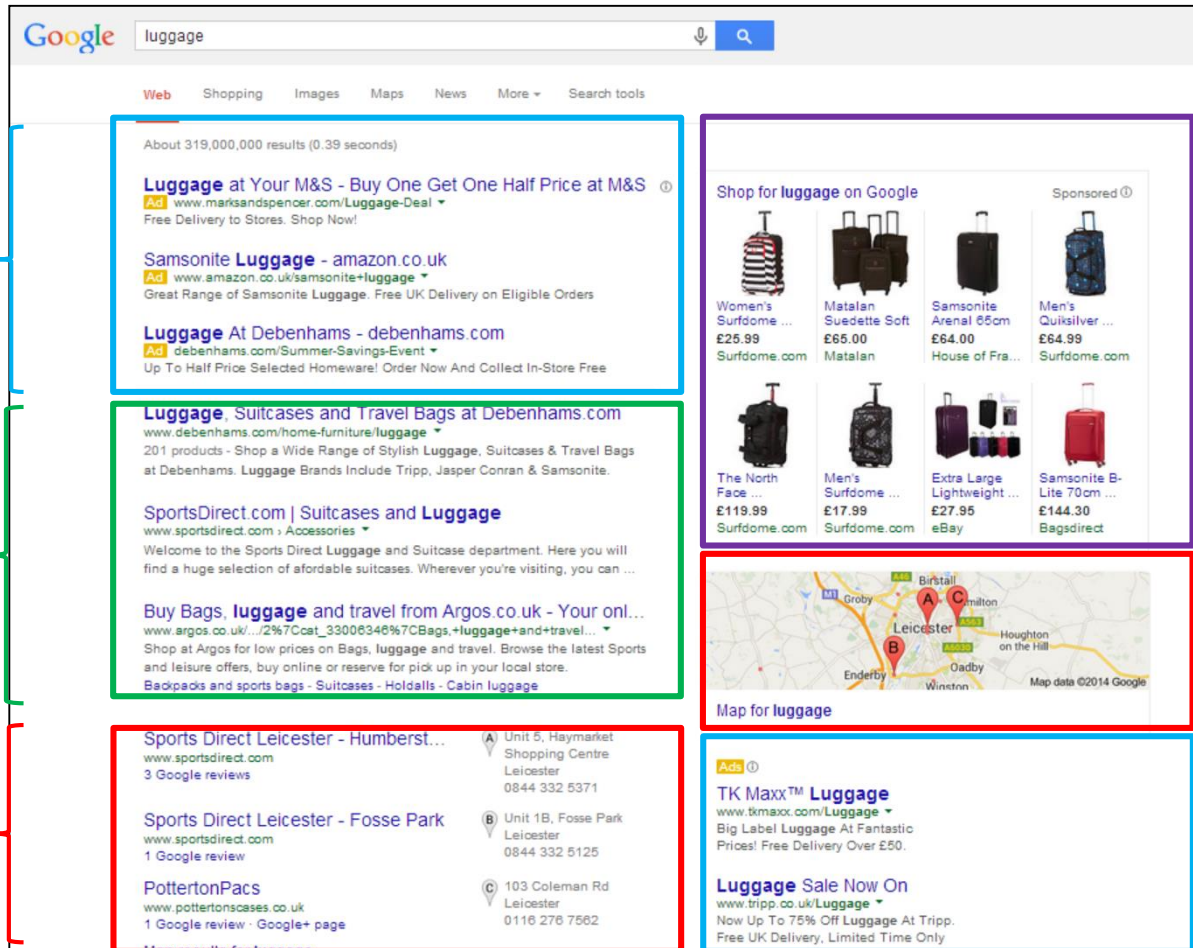
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Overview of marketing channels

On-site Sales/Conversions

Search marketing

(PPC, SEO, Merchant Centre)

Traffic to your site from other sources

(email, affiliates, display ads, social, mobile ads, PR, 3rd party sites, shopping comparison, voucher sites, lead generation)

Conversion optimisation

Shopping platforms and market places

(Amazon, eBay)

Other off-site sales/leads

(Social, Mobile Apps, daily deals sites)

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Off-site Sales/Conversions

Digital advertising in the UK – 2014 full year results

Classified 15%
1% Other
Display 32%
Full year 2014 total £7.194bn
52% Paid for search

- UK digital ad spend in 2014 reached record high of **£7.194 billion** with **14%** year-on-year growth
- **Mobile** reached **£1.62 billion**, representing **23%** of total
- Mobile had 63% year-on-year growth, driven by social, video and in-app ads
- **Social ads** grew **65%** year-on-year to **£922m** with 56% on mobile (£517m)
- **Search** still represents 52%

Source: www.iabuk.net/blog/digital-adspend-goes-stellar-in-2014

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Google results for 'luggage'*

@AnnStanley

Pay per click ads (via AdWords)

Organic or natural search results

Google My Business listings

Shopping Ads (paid ads via AdWords)

Google My Business listings

Pay per click text ads (via AdWords)

*luggage chosen to illustrate different types of results

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How to get into the Google results - free

- Organic or natural listings – search engine optimisation of your website i.e. SEO

- Map – create a free Google My Business Listing – which is part of Google+

- Images and videos – make sure these have keyphrases in the file names and tags

- News, blogs and author results – create ongoing blog content on your site or via news feed sites (PR)

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How to get into the Google results - paid

- Ads – set up an AdWords (or Bing Ads) pay per click account(s) – where you bid on relevant phrases and you pay if they click on your ad

- Shopping results – feed your ecommerce database into Google Merchant Centre and Shopping ads in AdWords (so you appear in the product image ads)

- Coming soon! – Comparison Shopping Engine (CSE) results (e.g. Kelkoo) will have to appear amongst Google ads as "Alternative results"

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2: Maximising your visibility in the local Google search results

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Google results for 'gardening services'*

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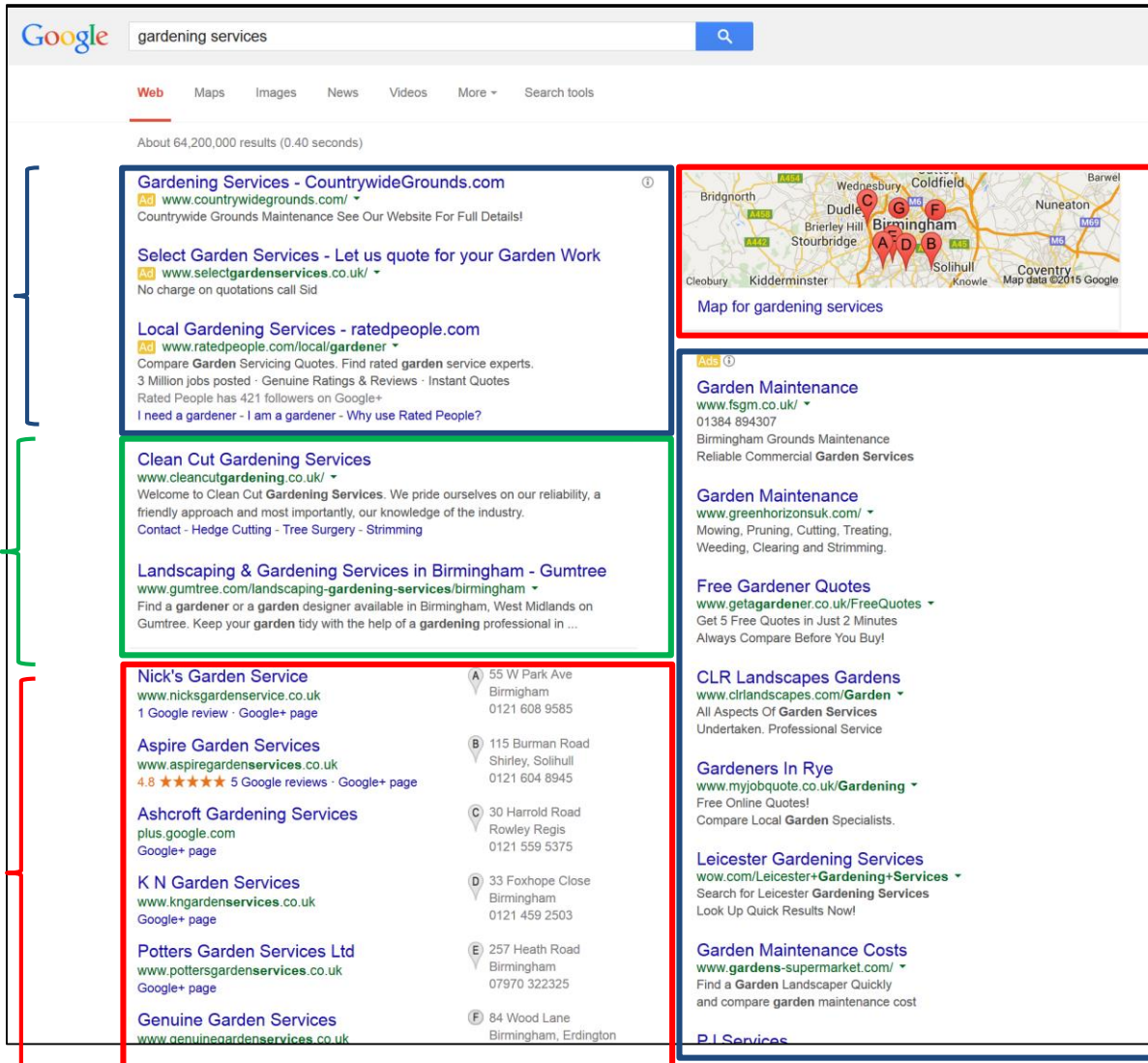
Pay per click text ads
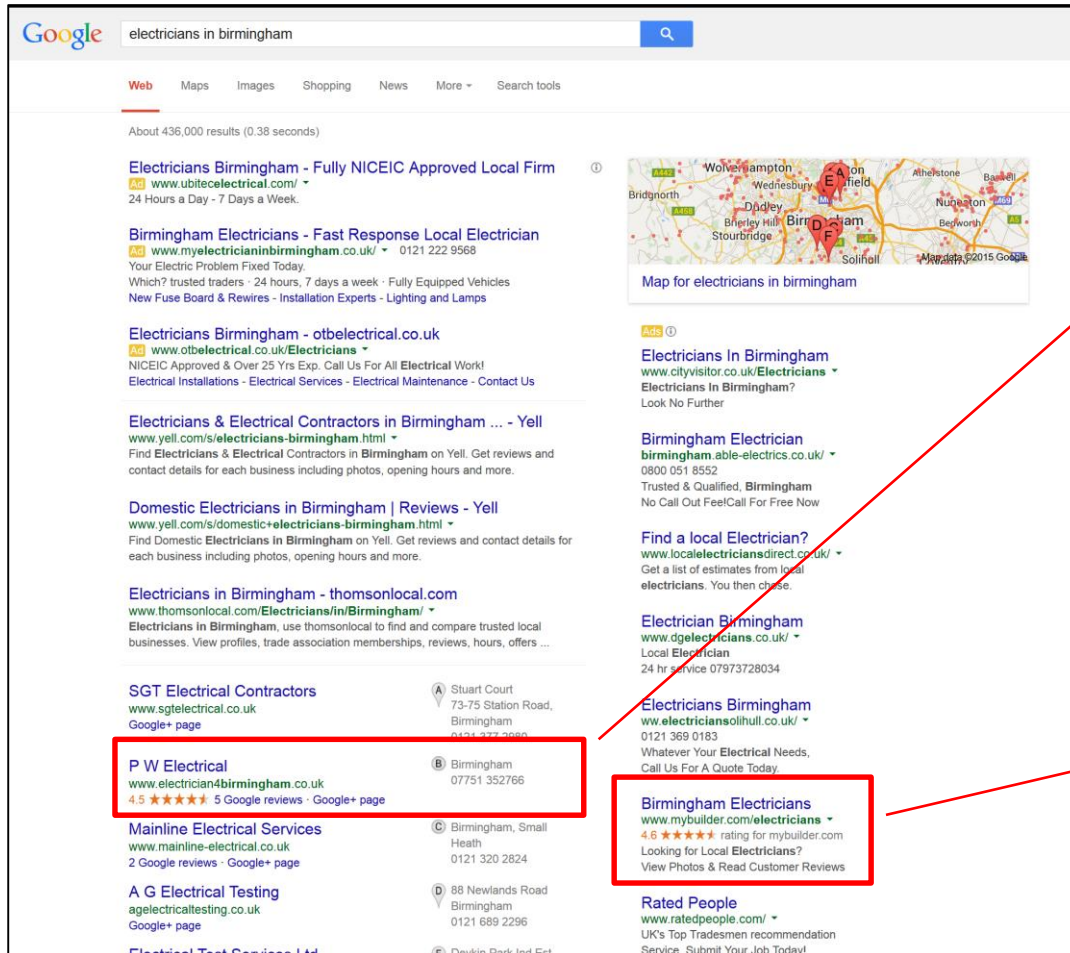
Organic or natural search results

Google My Business listings (x7)

Google My Business listings

Pay per click text ads

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* Uses your current location to deliver results

Searching for local services – Review stars

- Google My Business Page
- Reviews from Google
- Need >5 to show stars

- 3rd party reviews
- Need >30 to show automatically in ads

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Reviews.co.uk packages

- Independent reviews of your service and/or products
- Email your customers for reviews
- Right to reply
- Verified results uploaded into Google
- >30 reviews and 3.5 rating will automatically appear in PPC ads
- Use widgets or Schema to appear next to organic result
- Display reviews on your site to increase conversion rate

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Google My Business Pages
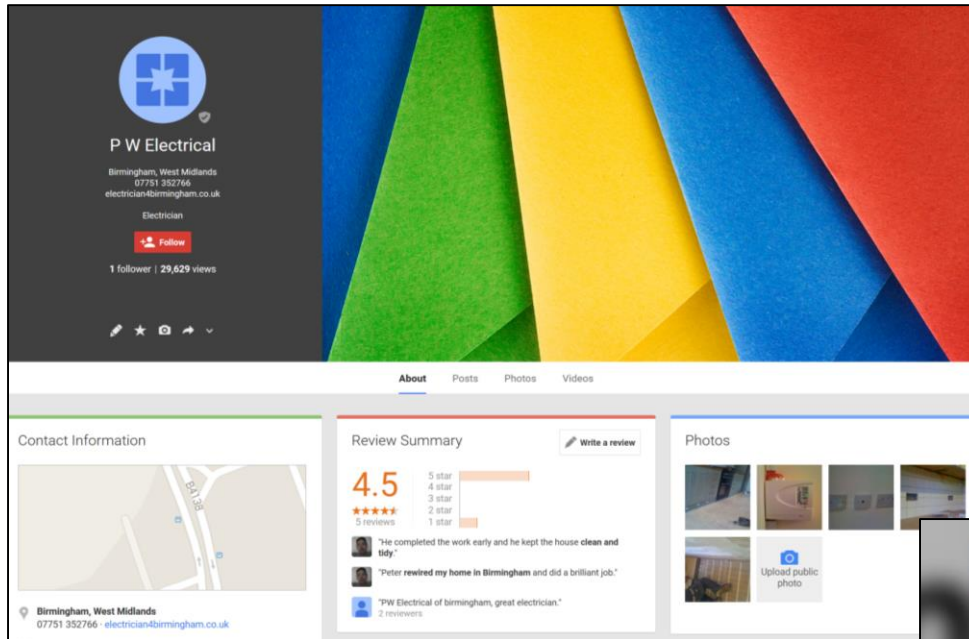
Enhance your page
- Upload a header image
- Upload a logo
- Personalise with photos and videos
- Encourage customers to give reviews (they have to be signed in)

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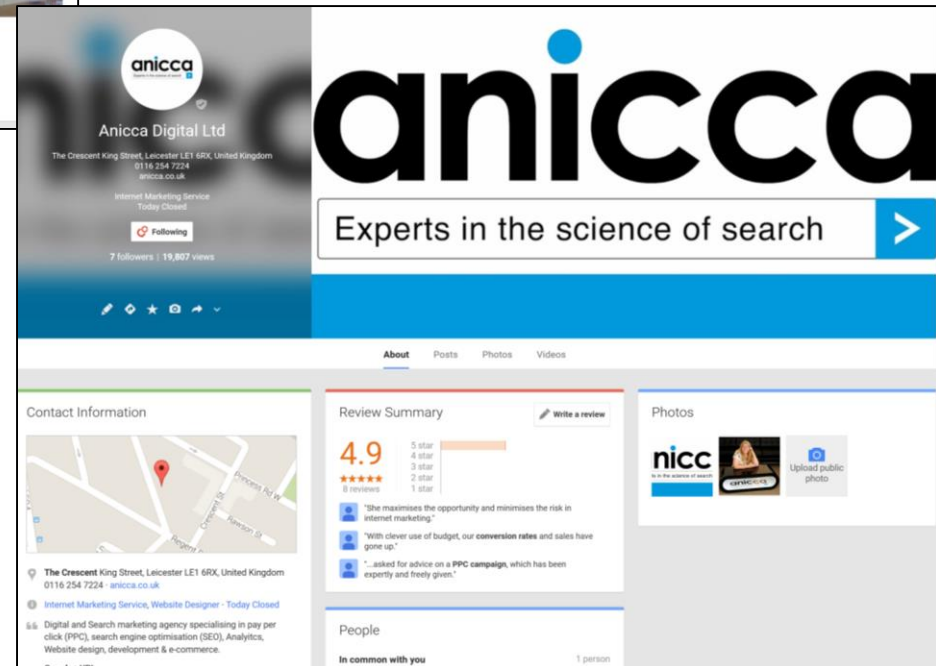
Get found for local search phrases - Optimise a page for each city

Internal links to useful and informative supporting content

Dedicated, unique, informative content about the city
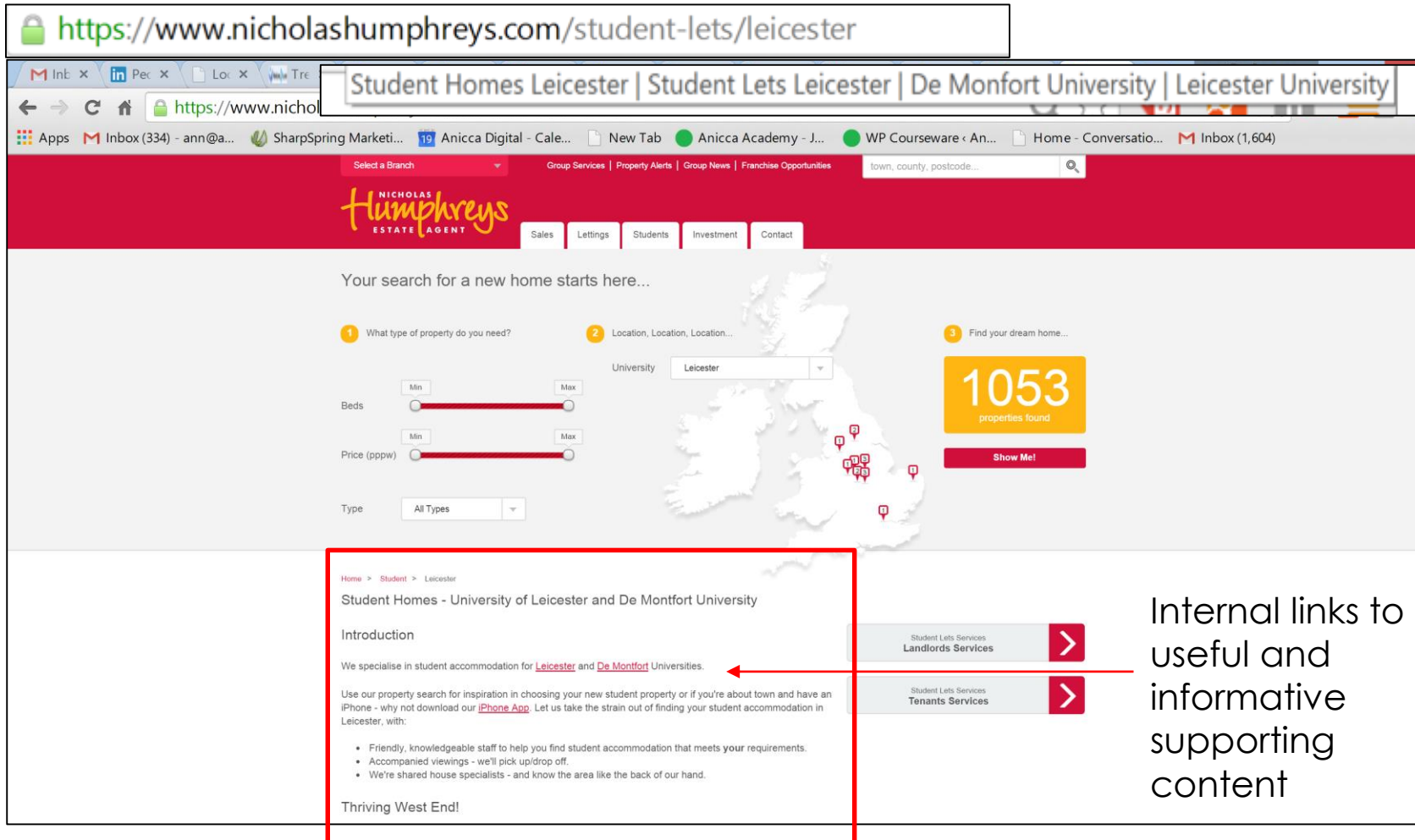
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How to get in the local search results

- **Pay (AdWords)**
    - Use local PPC ads, where you opt to only show your ads in your selected area
    - Include your phone number and address in your ads (using ad extensions). This will also give you "click-to-call" on mobiles
    - Use independent reviews, so your stars show up in your ads (you need >30 reviews with >3.5 rating)
- **Google My Business Pages**
    - Appear in the map and 7 local results by creating a strong Google My Business page (via Google+)
    - You will need a minimum of 5 Google reviews for your stars to show
- **Main organic results**
    - Get found in the local organic results for local search phrases by creating and optimising a page for each city or town (SEO)

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3: Understanding Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) – a beginners guide

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What is SEO?

SEO stands for "search engine optimisation."
It is the process of getting higher rankings and
more traffic from the "free", "organic",
"editorial" or "natural" listings on search engines

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How Search Engines Work

A search engine is made of three basic components:
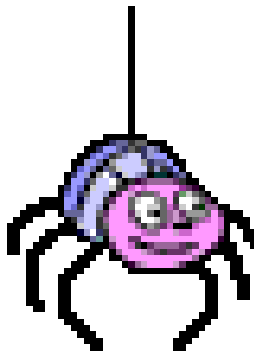
A Spider or Robot
An automated browser, it searches the web for new websites and changes to websites then views the web pages and strips out the text content

A Storage System or Database
A record of all the pages viewed by the Spider

A Matching Process or Relevancy Algorithm
The rules that tell the search engine how to determine what would be relevant to your search

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Key aspects of an SEO project

Technical
This aspect of SEO is focused on how well search engine spiders can crawl your site and index your content

Off-Page
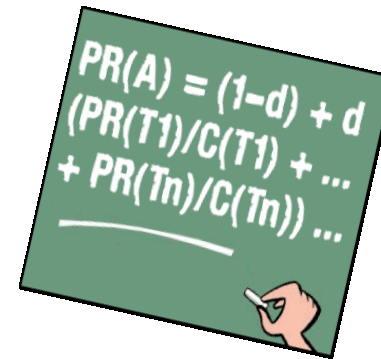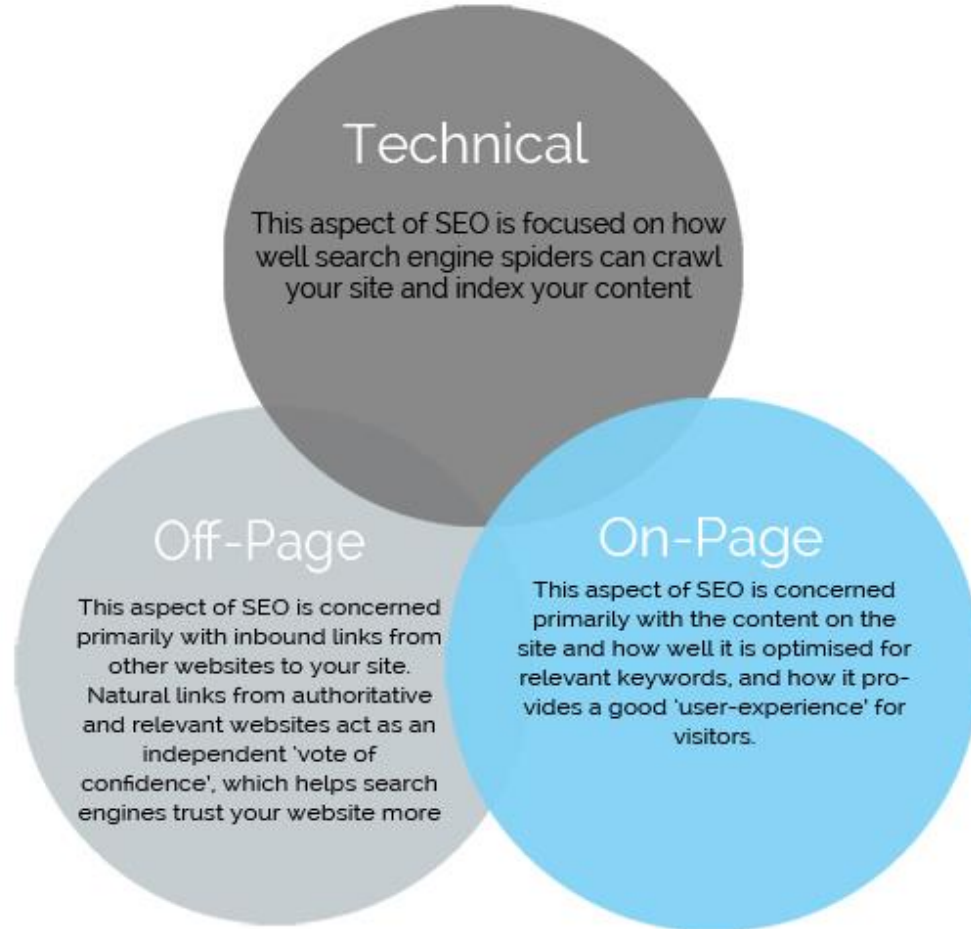This aspect of SEO is concerned primarily with inbound links from other websites to your site. Natural links from authoritative and relevant websites act as an independent 'vote of confidence', which helps search engines trust your website more

On-Page
This aspect of SEO is concerned primarily with the content on the site and how well it is optimised for relevant keywords, and how it pro-vides a good 'user-experience' for visitors.

There are over 200 factors used in the algorithms of the major search engines!

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Technical SEO

This aspect of SEO is focused on how well search engine spiders can crawl your site and index your content

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Technical SEO

- Domain length and presence of keyword
- URL structure
- Redirects
- SEO "Roadblocks" – Frames, Flash, JavaScript, password protected areas etc.
- Robot.txt file
- Sitemaps
- Internal linking
- Indexing and html errors
- Site speed
- Schema
- SSL certificate

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On-page optimisation

This aspect of SEO is concerned primarily with the content on the site and how well it is optimised for relevant keywords, and how it provides a good 'user-experience' for visitors.

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On-page factors

- Title Tag
- Meta Tags (e.g. description)
- Content (body text)
- Heading content
- Frequency and density of phrases
- Internal Link structure
- Image tags and file names

Off-page optimisation

This aspect of SEO is concerned primarily with inbound links from other websites to your site. Natural links from authoritative and relevant websites act as an independent 'vote of confidence', which helps search engines trust your website more

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Off-site SEO (website authority)

- Link earning
  - Quality of referring site
  - Anchor text – mix of text, brand, domain name, service, keyword (penalise if too many exact match keywords)
  - Mix of follow and no-follow links
  - Citation – mentions your company name but no link
- Social mentions – correlation or causation?
  - Google+
  - Authorship – images were recently removed and will only show if your post is in Google+
  - Facebook Shares
  - Reviews

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4: Google Algorithm Updates

Google regularly changes its search algorithm to ensure only the most relevant and authoritative websites are shown at the top of the search results.

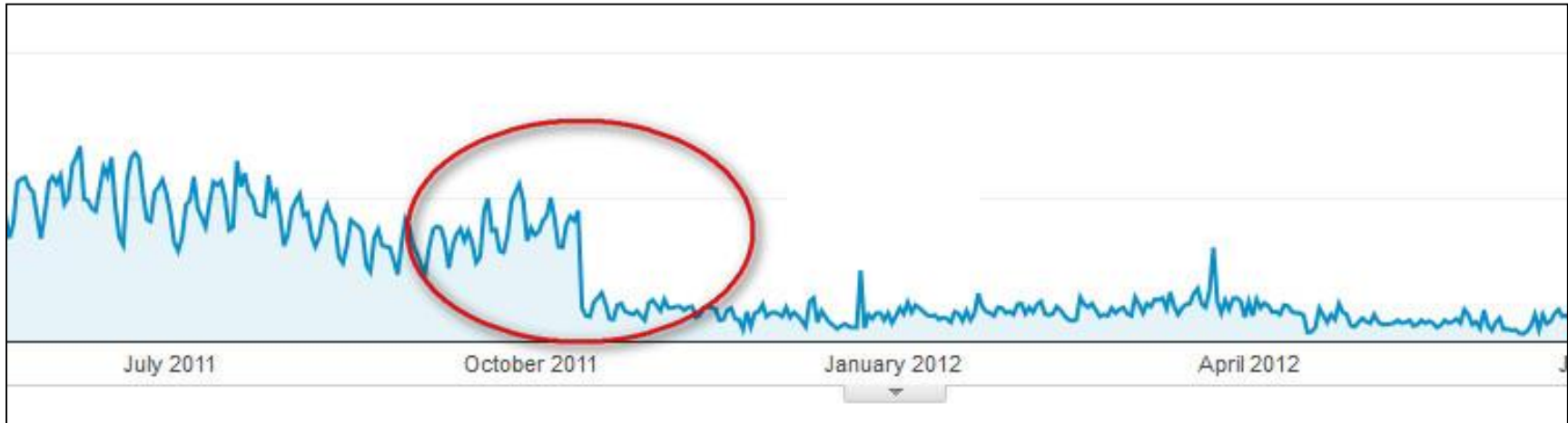The majority of algorithm updates target spammy techniques and low quality sites.

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Panda

When: February 2011
Target: Sites with low quality content
Impact: At its launch Panda affected up to 12% of search results. Panda seemed to crack down on thin content, content farms, sites with high ad-to-content ratios, & a number of other quality issues

Google Panda Impact

- Sudden drops in traffic on a specific date
- Check search blogs for industry news on Google updates
- Check your Webmaster tools for penalty notices

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When: September 2014
Target: Sites with low quality content.
More precise and will allow more high-quality
small and medium-sized sites to rank better
What Google said: *"Based on user
(and webmaster!) feedback, we've been
able to discover a few more signals to
help Panda identify low-quality content
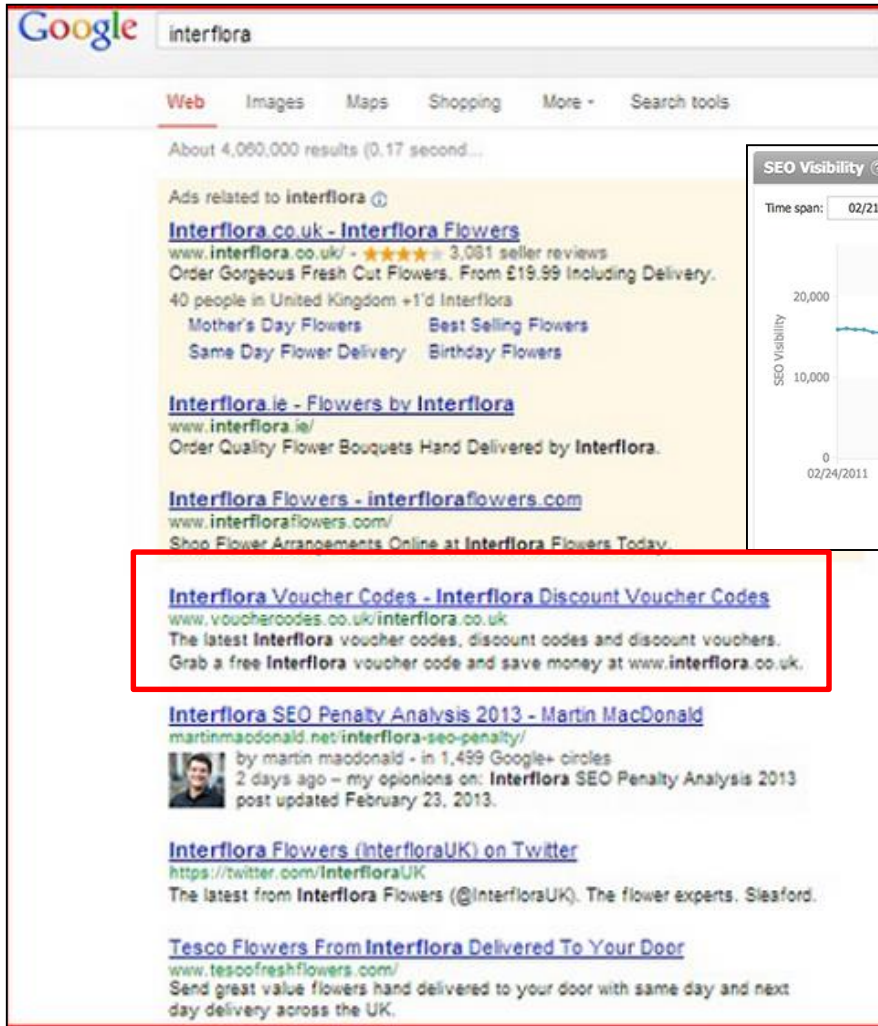more precisely."*

Panda
4.0 & 4.1

Penguin

When: April 2012

Target: All forms of 'webspam', predominantly link-spam, techniques like "keyword stuffing" and "link schemes"

Impact: Initially impacted approximately 3% of English searches. Has had a long lasting influence on link building practices

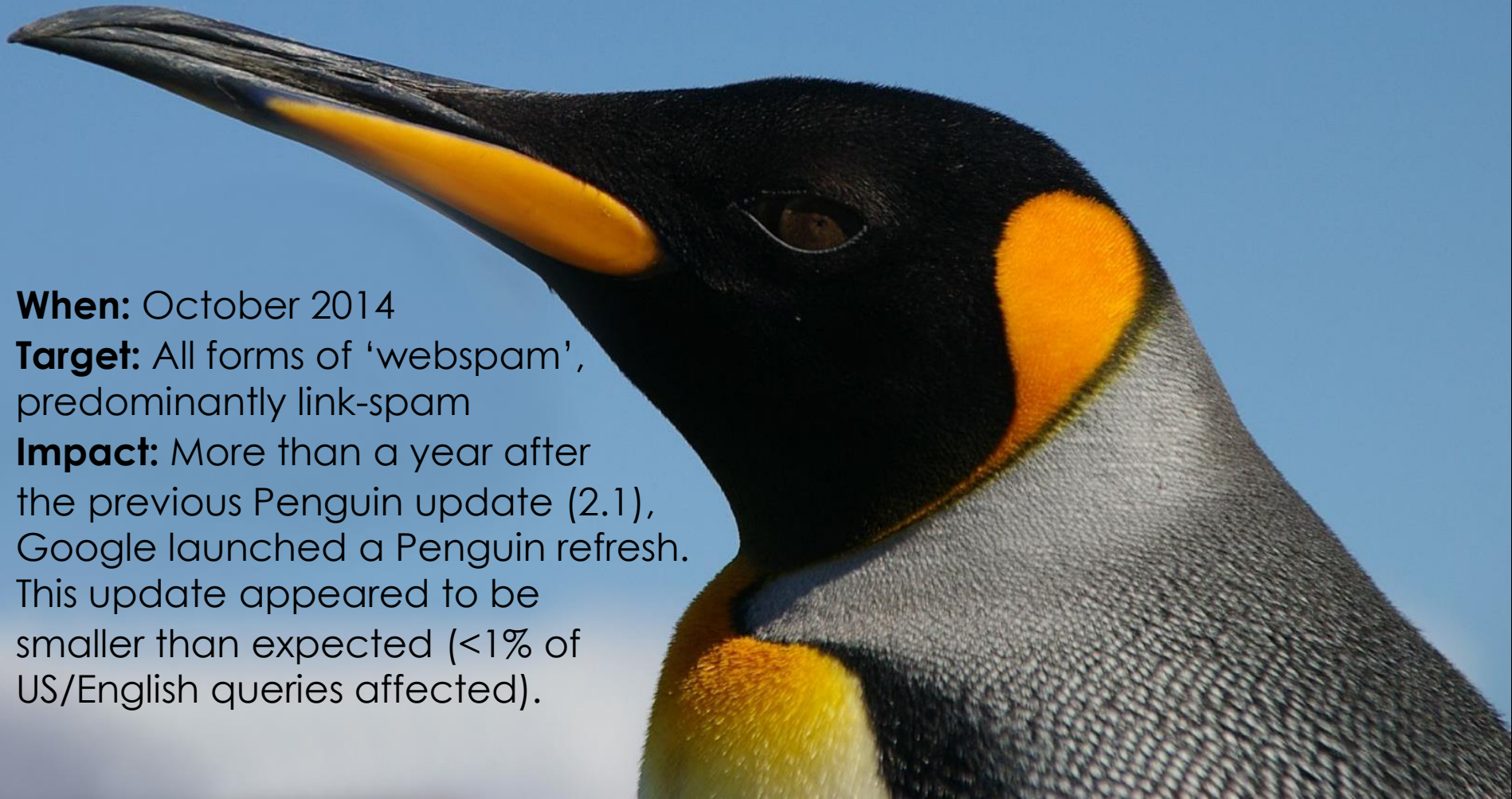# Interflora and
Google's Penguin 2.0 Update

Penguin 3.0

When: October 2014
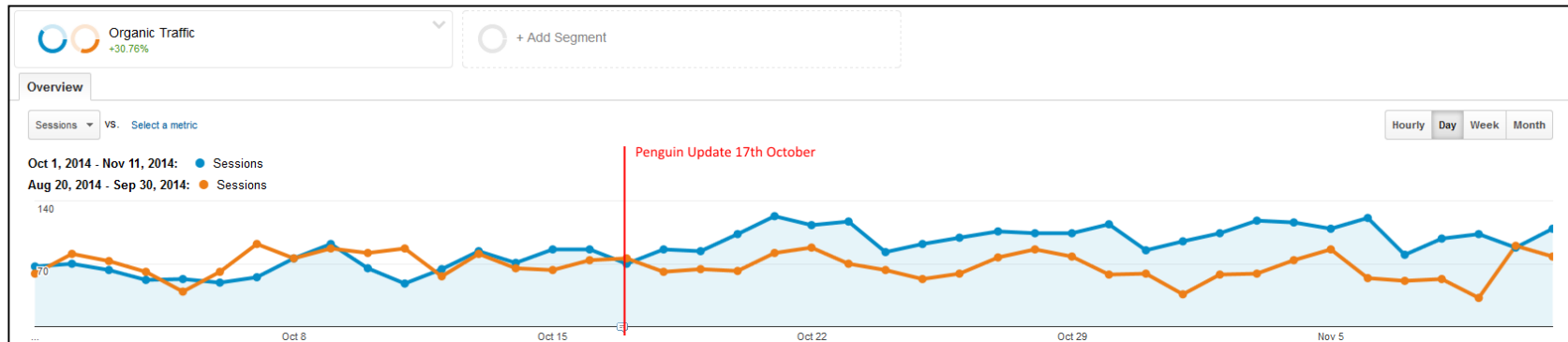**Target:** All forms of 'webspam', predominantly link-spam
Impact: More than a year after the previous Penguin update (2.1), Google launched a Penguin refresh. This update appeared to be smaller than expected (<1% of US/English queries affected).
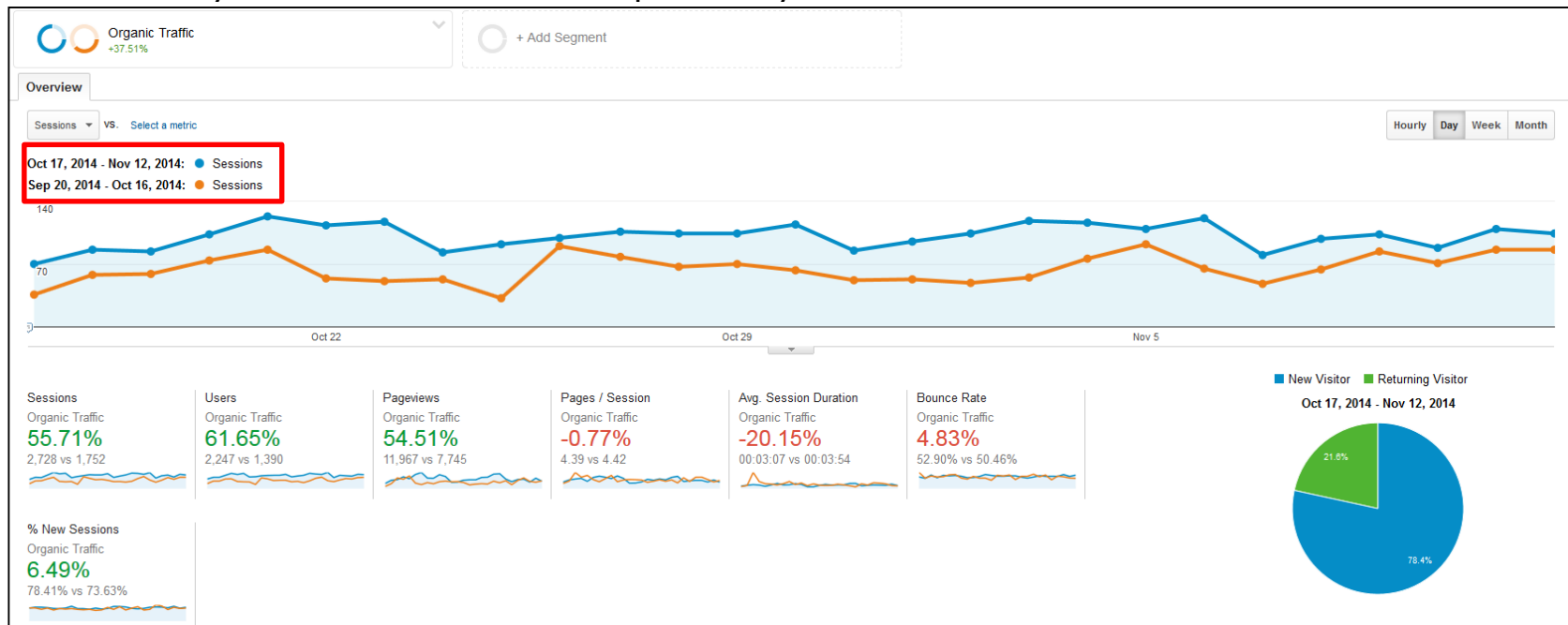
Penguin 3.0 Recovery

Month on month improvement at time of recovery

Year on year increase after penalty recover

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Hummingbird

When: Released to coincide with Google's 15th birthday (August 20th, 2013)

Target: Major change which focuses on the way we ask a series of questions in context ("**semantic search**"), rather than us searching on a deliberate string of keyphrases

This will help with the use of voice search, as it is similar to the way we speak rather than what we type in

Impact: Results often include the knowledge graph which contains the answers - so users can get what they want to know without leaving Google (especially when using Google Now on a mobile)

Semantic search

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Voice-enabled Search
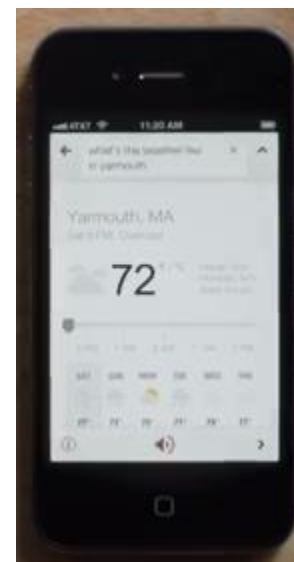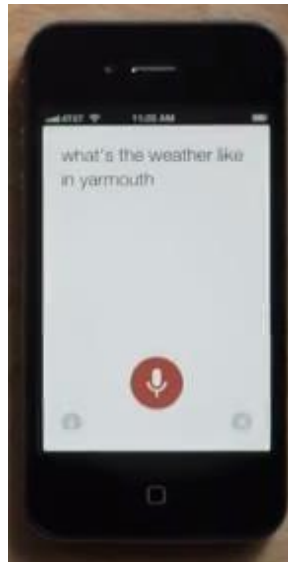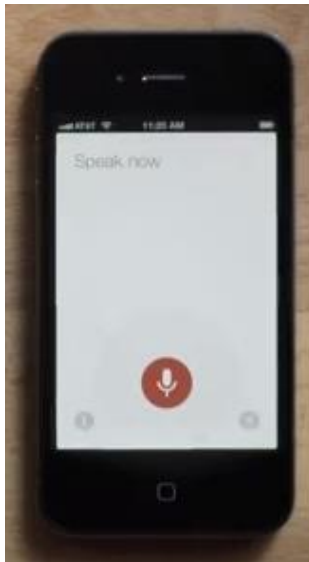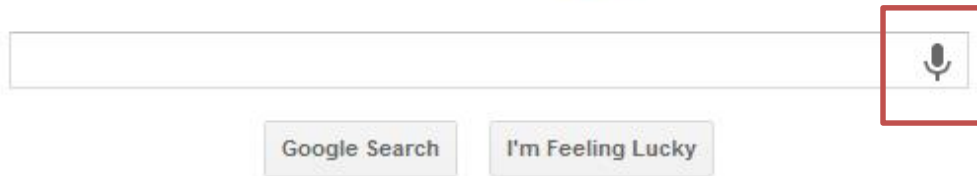
Other Google Changes

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Not-provided search phrases

You can get some data from Webmaster Tools but (only 3 months)

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Structured data and rich snippets

Argyle Mustache SocksMustacheStuff.com
mustachestuff.com › Shop › Products ▾
★★★★★ Rating: 5 - 1 vote - $9.00 - In stock
Jun 12, 2012 - Blue argyle awesomeness is about to rock your socks on. These sweet
Argyle Mustache Socks are 75% cotton, 20% polyester, 5% spandex ...

NEC (National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham) | The List
https://www.list.co.uk/place/52354-nec/ ▾
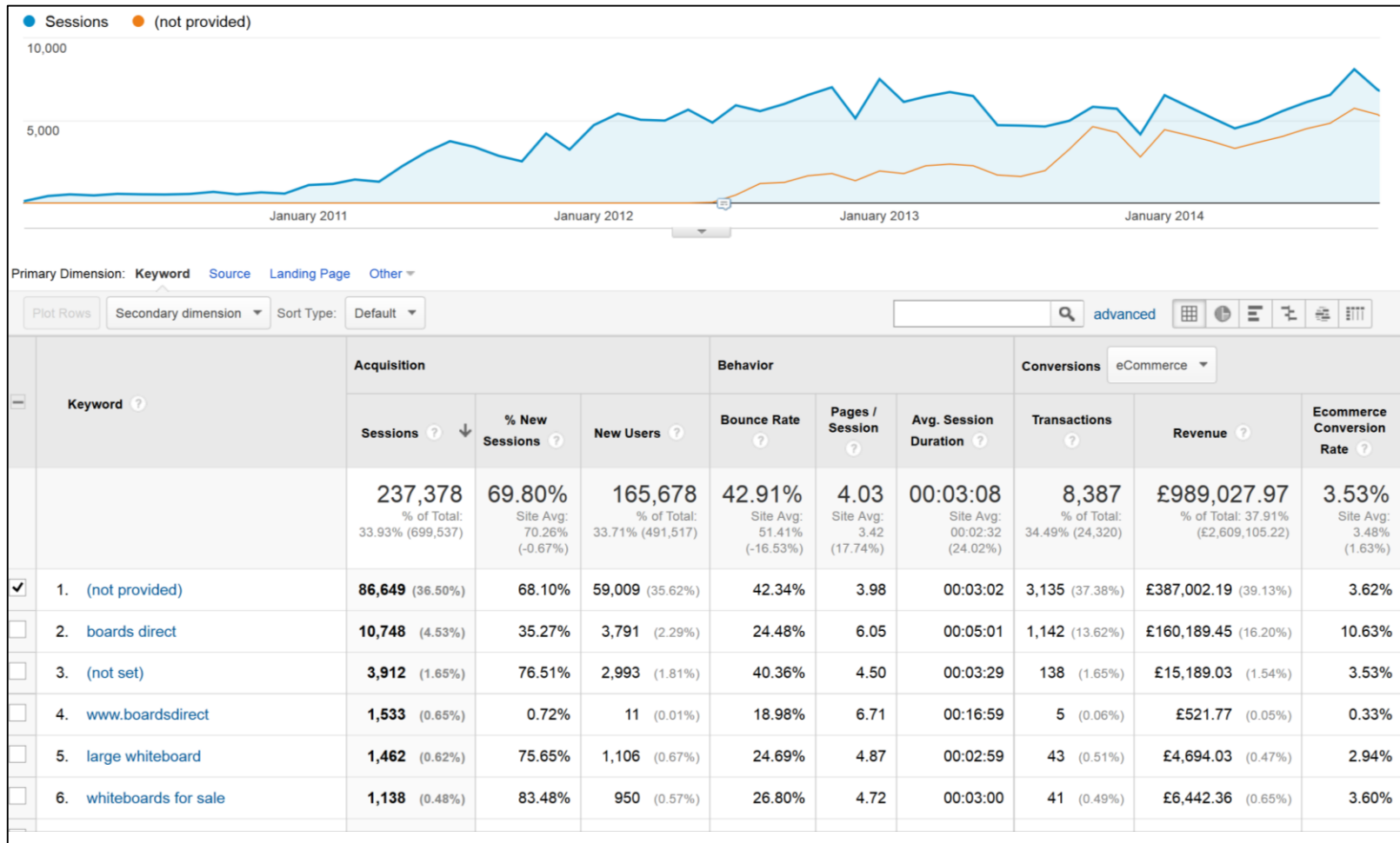The busiest and largest **exhibition** centre in the whole of the land, the **National Exhibition Centre** contains the multi-purpose LG Arena and hosts everything from

Fri, Feb 20	Caravan, Camping And Motorhome Show 2015
Sat, Feb 21	Caravan, Camping And Motorhome Show 2015
Sun, Feb 22	Caravan, Camping And Motorhome Show 2015

London Theatre Tickets, Reviews and News | WhatsOnStage
www.whatsonstage.com/**london-theatre**/ ▾
Get the latest info on all **London theatre** playing in the West End, Off-West End and Fringe theatres. Read show reviews, and buy **London theatre** tickets.

Sat 11 Apr	Bugsy Malone
Thu 16 Apr	American Buffalo
Thu 23 Apr	Romeo and Juliet

Ultimate apple pie | BBC Good Food
www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/2052/ultimate-apple-pie ▾
★★★★★ Rating: 4.6 - 92 votes - 2 hrs 30 mins - 695 cal
Try this sumptuous Bramley **apple pie** - simple to make and great to prepare in advance for a dinner party.

- Less than 1% of site used Schema or structured data
- Identify any elements of the site that can be marked up using schema (refer to schema.org for more information).
- Highlight and additional information that could be marked up.
- Mark up individual elements such as business name, address, phone number, opening times and reviews.

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HTTPS/SSL – secure websites – ranking factor?

- August 6th 2014

- Google announced that they would be giving preference to secure sites

- Adding encryption would provide a "lightweight" rankings boost!
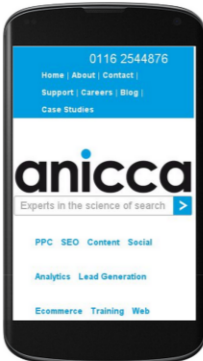
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Google Mobile friendly sites and speed tests

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April 21st – Mobilegeddon!

- Each page on your site will be classed as either mobile friendly or not – and tested every time there is a relevant search

- Results can be marked as "mobile friendly" or you can run pages through mobile test

- After April 21st "unfriendly" pages will get lower rankings on mobile search results

- Get your mobile load speed to <1 second or all ranking will suffer

- Mobile apps (Android) will achieve better rankings in mobile search result (and its worth linking your app to the your mobile pages)

Exercise - get Google on your phone and search for "sofa"

- What do you see?

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5: Essential tools and techniques to help you carry out your own SEO

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Tools for SEO

Tool	Purpose	Technical SEO	On-site	Off-site	KPI/ Tracking
Google Analytics	Tracking and user behaviour		✓		✓
Google Webmaster tools (and Bing)	Site information and updating Google/Bing	✓	✓	✓	✓
AdWords Keyword Planner/Bing Ads	Keyphrase research and search volumes		✓		
Moz*	Various – crawl diagnostics, links, authority	✓	✓	✓	✓
Links e.g. AhRefs*/ Majestic*	Links, site authority			✓	
Ranking tools eg. Tools.seobook.com	Ranking positions in search engines		✓		✓
SEO Monitor*	Not-provided keyphrases, keyphrase, site/competitor rankings	✓	✓		✓

*Freemium or paid tool

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