WEB 2.0 RANKER

All Tests and Test Results
from The SEO Mad Scientist Lab in 2023

Yearly SEO Test Report

2023

SEO Mad Scientist 2023 Report

12 Months Testing SEO Tactics

As SEOs, we're always testing and tinkering with new strategies. Usually, we either find interesting outcomes or draw conclusions from the chaos. But you know what's wild? Sometimes, when we're sifting through the results, we stumble upon ideas we never meant to look into...

But for our results to be legit, they must be repeatable. So, we keep on revisiting old tests to ensure test results are consistent. To make it easy to navigate, we've included links to the corresponding updates for each test setup and update. After reporting, many tests continue to be monitored, so follow along for more recent updates!

- What Can We Do for Faster Indexation of Citations? (& Other Content)
- How Much Can AI Replace SEO & Content Work?
- How Far Can We Push Rankings Using CTR Manipulation With GBP Listings?
- How Much Can Press Releases Impact Rankings?
- What is the Ranking Impact of Creating Topically Relevant, Optimized Content v. Building Links?
- How Can We Use Google Notes in SEO Strategies?

Indexation Tests What Can We Do for Faster Indexation of Citations (& Other Content)

Test Setup:

Indexing has been a major part of the SEO industry since the beginning; as you're off-site, so it is only counted if a Google bot has crawled and indexed it. Over the years, Google has gotten

more strict on what they index and how frequently, so there's been a big push to find more effective ways of getting pages indexed.

So, we decided to do some index testing to see if we could get the URLs indexed quicker.

First, we compiled a small list of ideas and created a test website. We wanted to use a new URL that would only be crawled or indexed by something outside of us getting Google bot to crawl there.

We spent 2 days executing the various ideas to see if ANYTHING outside of building a bunch of links or connecting Search Console would get Google to index the site.

Here are the things methods we tried:

- Submit the sitemap of another website with the website at the top (technically a link and technically not allowed by Google but figured we would try)
- Add a URL/link to a web page and submit the page to the search console.
- Put the URL in a Google Sheet, embed the sheet on a web page, and submit the web page for indexation.
- Add the URL to the search console (not verified)
- Send it in an e-mail putting in the subject and body
- Send it in an attachment PDF in an e-mail
- Add it to a rank tracker that checks to exact URL, root URL, and site: URL
- Submit URL to Google Page Speed Insights

Test Update: [January 13, 2023](#)

More than anything, we wanted to get a rolled index instantly, but even finding a process to get them indexed over 5 to 7 days would be valuable.

The methods tested so far have yet to push indexation in 48 hours.

If the site indexes at all, then we will know that something we have tried worked, and we will continue removing variables to uncover what worked.

Test Update: January 27, 2023

We tested different indexing methods over the past few weeks to see how they impact Google search rankings, and still…

It took over 48 hours for our last test site to be indexed. We noticed the indexation around 7 pm on Sunday. However, it's possible that the site could have been indexed at any time between Friday and Sunday.
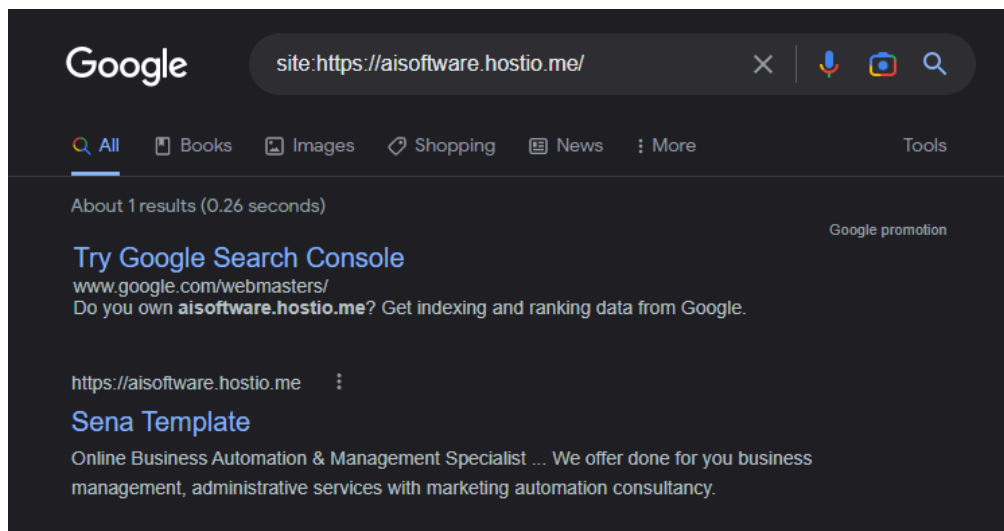
The first thing we did was submit it in another website's sitemap, which technically created a backlink and is also why we believe the crawl was triggered.

But we weren't sure if one of our tests caused the brand-new URL to get indexed, or was it something else?

We created multiple other test sites, and all of them were indexed using methods that generated some kind of backlink. *So was linking pushing the index or just the crawl?*

We figured we would find out by testing what brought us here in the first place - trying to index citations that seemed to be struggling to get into the SERPs.

If you have been doing local SEO, you may have trouble getting your citations to index, especially without link-building or unique content. If our site was indexed due to any of our actions last week, we should be able to get Google to index our citation URLs by doing the same thing.

Breaking out last week's test bullets into individual tests, we ran a list of citation URLs through individual steps to see if we could find what specifically may have influenced indexation…

We have not seen any results as of this update.

How Much Can AI Replace Your SEO Work?

Test Setup: January 13, 2023

With all the new AI content tools, we wondered if "AI Content" could outrank "Human Content"? But also, *how far could we push using AI content in SEO campaigns?*

Google has said machine-generated content is only bad when it's NOT done for the user in a quality way, while other TOS and statements have said it's not allowed.

For a quick example, we wanted to take a page on our test website where we had done some very loose SEO recently and simply swap out the content with AI Content. For these tests, the only requirement is that the content itself not be edited. We can change all technical elements, but the headings, content, words…

Here's a quick before & after shot after swapping out existing content with our updated AI content, then submitting the URL to be crawled.

Before:

Keyword	Change	Latest	Best	First	Updated	URL Found ↑
seo consulting bennington ne	0	5	2	10 ↗	2023-01-12 11:49:14	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting bennington	0	8	3	18 ↗	2023-01-12 11:49:22	/seo-consulting/
seo firm bennington	0	66	59	67 ↗	2023-01-12 11:49:22	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting near me	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:49:20	NOT FOUND
seo consulting omaha	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:48:32	NOT FOUND
seo consulting nebraska	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:49:25	NOT FOUND
seo consulting	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:50:16	NOT FOUND
seo bennington	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:48:42	NOT FOUND
seo services bennington	0	N/A	55	N/A	2023-01-12 11:48:47	NOT FOUND
seo company bennington	0	N/A	72	N/A	2023-01-12 11:49:28	NOT FOUND
search engine optimization bennin...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:49:02	NOT FOUND
local seo services bennington	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:49:08	NOT FOUND
local seo bennington	0	N/A	55	56 ↘	2023-01-12 11:49:07	NOT FOUND
seo company	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 11:50:46	NOT FOUND
seo consulting omaha nebraska	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-12 12:33:23	NOT FOUND

After:

Keyword	Change	Latest	Best	First	Updated	URL Found ↑
seo consulting bennington ne	0	5	2	10 ↗	2023-01-13 09:44:38	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting bennington	-7 ↗	1 ★	1	18 ↗	2023-01-13 09:44:41	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting omaha	♥	37 ★	37	N/A	2023-01-13 09:44:41	/seo-consulting/
seo services bennington	♥	12 ★	12	N/A	2023-01-13 09:44:43	/seo-consulting/
seo firm bennington	0	66	59	67 ↗	2023-01-13 09:44:39	/seo-consulting/
seo company bennington	♥	5 ★	5	N/A	2023-01-13 09:44:42	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting omaha nebraska	♥	26 ★	26	N/A	2023-01-13 09:46:47	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting near me	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-13 09:44:47	NOT FOUND
seo consulting nebraska	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-13 09:44:38	NOT FOUND
seo consulting	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-13 09:44:40	NOT FOUND
seo bennington	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-13 09:44:38	NOT FOUND
search engine optimization bennin...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-13 09:46:45	NOT FOUND
local seo services bennington	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-13 09:46:45	NOT FOUND
local seo bennington	0	N/A	55	56 ↘	2023-01-13 09:46:45	NOT FOUND

The page didn't have great SEO to start with, so we're working on other tests that already have pages ranking better and developing the prompts we are using to generate or optimize the content.

Test Update: January 27, 2023

Last week we used Chat GPT to add some additional optimization to our page by asking it for relevant entities related to our target keyword and simply asking it to rewrite our content, including references to the list or relevant entities within it. This simple prompt provided a lot of additional relevance to the page, as you can see from the rankings:

Keyword	Change	Latest	Best	First	Updated	URL Found ↑
seo consulting bennington ne	0	1★	1	10↗	2023-01-17 00:32:43	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting bennington	0	1★	1	18↗	2023-01-17 00:32:43	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting omaha	0	38	37	N/A	2023-01-17 00:32:41	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting nebraska	0	34★	34	N/A	2023-01-17 00:32:41	/seo-consulting/
seo bennington	15↘	18	3	N/A	2023-01-17 00:32:59	/seo-consulting/
seo services bennington	-5↗	7★	7	N/A	2023-01-17 00:32:52	/seo-consulting/
seo firm bennington	-2↗	2★	2	67↗	2023-01-17 00:32:43	/seo-consulting/
seo company bennington	0	4★	4	N/A	2023-01-17 00:32:42	/seo-consulting/
search engine optimization bennin...	0	7★	7	N/A	2023-01-17 00:32:41	/seo-consulting/
local seo services bennington	-1↗	6★	6	N/A	2023-01-17 00:33:00	/seo-consulting/
local seo bennington	0	9★	9	56↗	2023-01-17 00:32:41	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting omaha nebraska	0	25	24	N/A	2023-01-17 00:33:05	/seo-consulting/
seo consulting near me	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2023-01-17 00:32:43	NOT FOUND

But how far can we take AI optimization? We wanted to see the impact of implementing the same contempt on the rest of the website.

Here is the overall general impact on the site after re-writing a few paragraphs of content with Open AI across the website and submitting them to the search console.
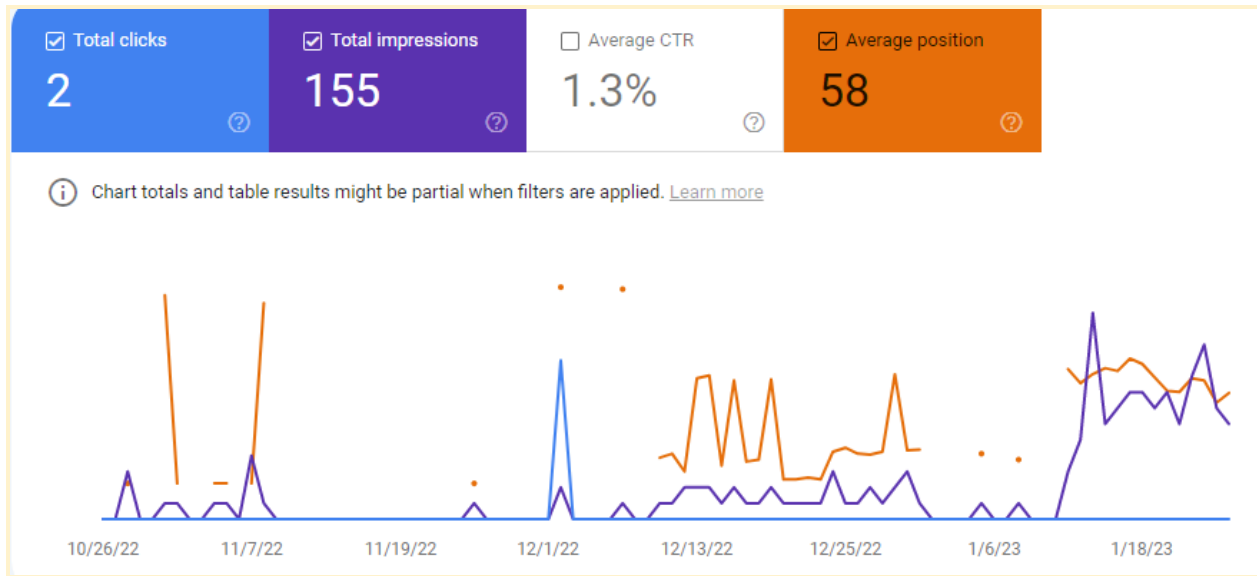
In general, the optimization added to the content seems to be helping, although, remember, the site was not optimized to begin with.

Test Update: February 24, 2023

Last month we mentioned in an update how we used AI content to gain additional rankings on our site. In the specific test, we used chat GPT to generate very specific content that we strategically placed on our site and prompted the AI exactly how to optimize (such as prompting it to mention specific entities and their relationships when writing or re-writing content)

However, we have seen quite a few people offering various problems to help generate and optimize content, some of which seem more advanced than others. We've seen prompts being suggested as simple as "Write me an article about 'XYZ' that would likely appear at the top of Google search when searching for the term ABC."

Now we assume that the AI doesn't know Google's algorithm, so asking it to do something like this doesn't make much sense, but if we were to ask the AI if it understands certain aspects of the algorithm and important concepts such as EAT, it seems to have a clear understanding.

Do you know Googles Quality Guidelines document?

Yes, I'm familiar with Google's Quality Guidelines document. It provides guidance to website owners and content creators on how to create high-quality, user-friendly, and search engine-friendly websites. The guidelines cover topics such as content quality, website functionality, mobile compatibility, security, and more. Following these guidelines can help websites achieve better rankings in Google search results and provide a better user experience for visitors.

Are you familiar with Google EAT?

Yes, I'm familiar with Google E-A-T. E-A-T stands for Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness, and it's a framework that Google uses to evaluate the quality of content on a website. The E-A-T framework is especially important for websites that provide content related to sensitive topics such as health, finance, and news. To improve E-A-T, website owners should provide high-quality, accurate, and reliable information that is written by experts in the field and supported by credible sources. They should also provide information about the authors of the content and demonstrate that the website is trustworthy and secure. Improving E-A-T can help websites rank higher in search results and improve the user experience for visitors.

So we wondered if we simply ask the AI to implement these concepts when writing the article we are asking for, will it produce content as good as or better than our previously generated AI content? We asked it to write content for our test site, targeting the term "SEO Services" and related terms. We then updated our "strategic AI content" with our new "cut and paste AI content" and watched the results. So far, it has seemed to be performing much worse.

Keyword	Change	Latest	Best
local seo bennington	0	8	6
seo firm bennington	0	16	2
seo bennington	0	26	3
seo company bennington	0	26	4
local seo services bennington	0	N/A	5
search engine optimization bennin...	-8 ↗	8	6
seo services bennington	0	21	7
seo consulting omaha nebraska	12 ↘	69	24
seo consulting nebraska	0	74	34
seo consulting omaha	0	67	37

We attempted this test again, asking it to write an article about Digital Marketing vs. Traditional Marketing. We wondered if it would give us something that's even "rank-worthy" (will it even appear in the top 100). This time we put more emphasis on implementing EAT principles.

The result was a bunch of misquotations, and low-value content. But more importantly, did it rank at all? Not surprisingly… No

Keyword	Change	Latest	Best	First
Digital Marketing Vs Traditional Mar...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Traditional Marketing Vs Digital Mar...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Should I use Traditional Marketing ...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Which is better, traditional or digita...	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
creative 1 media Digital Marketing V...	♥	75 ★	75	75
creative1media.net Digital Marketin...	♥	1 ★	1	1

We weren't too surprised by these results, but we did want to test some of these Concepts because many AI "Prompt Experts" appear more every day. As powerful as AI may be, its output's quality still depends on the person using it.

If you've been considering using AI, we suggest you take a look but don't think it will be a quick fix for your content because we found out that it simply doesn't work that way.

How Far Can We Push Rankings Using CTR Manipulation With GBP Listings?

Test Setup: June 16, 2023

To test CTR on some of our older test properties, we're manually interacting with GBPs through GBP posts and other listing actions - all through mobile devices. Below you can see the visibility changes so far…
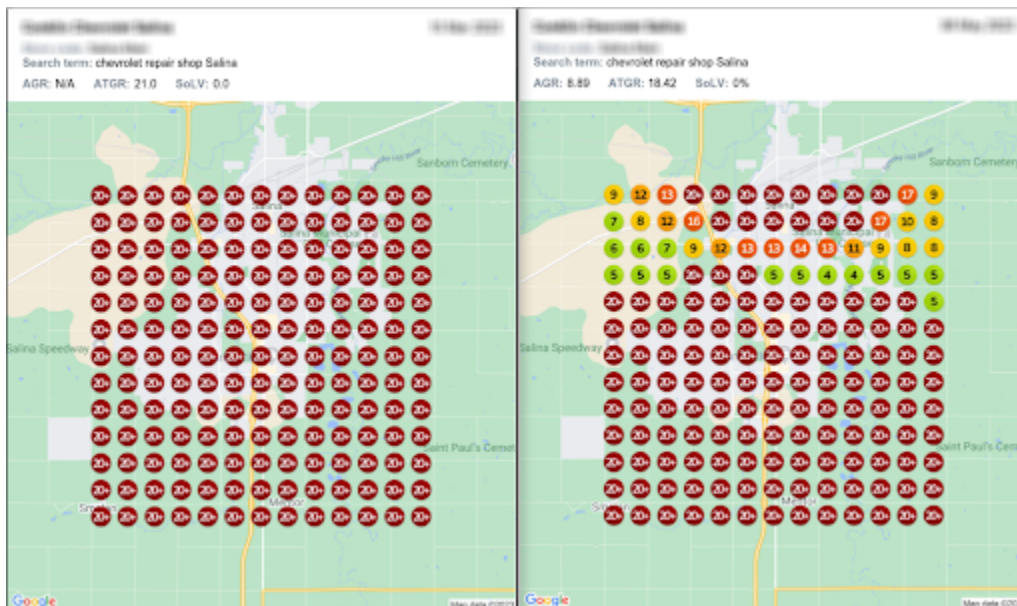
A week after the initial CTR had been completed, 2 out of 3 test campaigns saw improvement!

& this wasn't just a quick pick-me-up – we're talking about campaigns that had been stagnant for months, now coursing with newfound energy.

Test Update: June 30, 2023

First, we reviewed our accountant listing. After a week of dedicated work, local rankings were pushing in a positive direction.
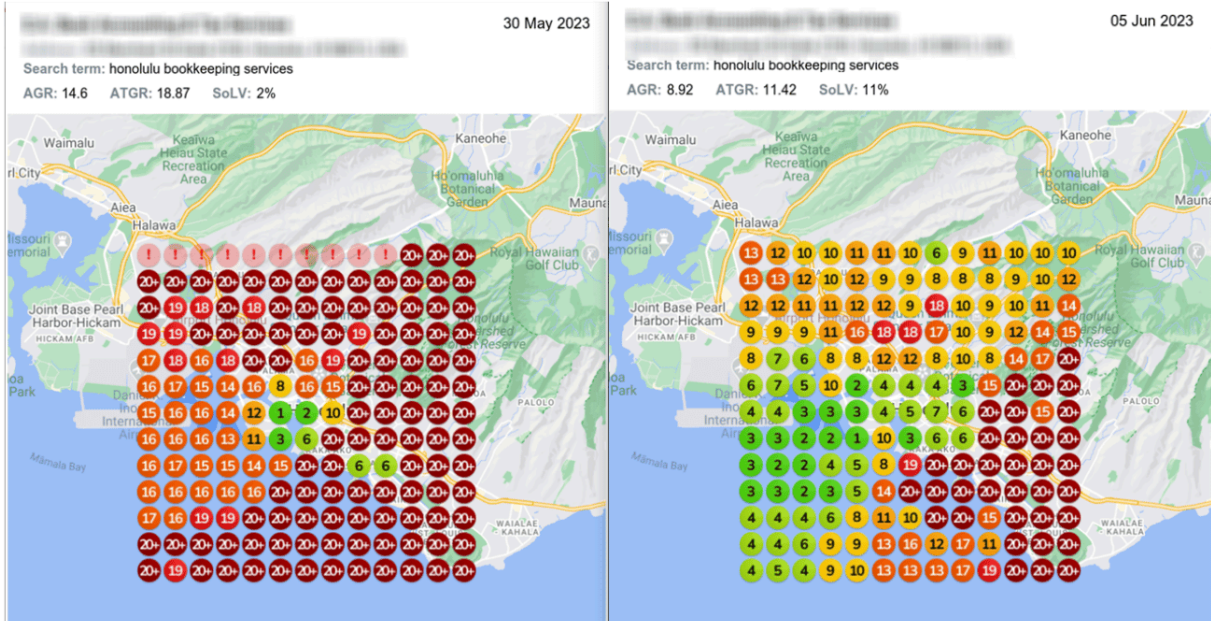
Then we looked at our realtor listing. This one took a bit longer to see results - two weeks of solid work. And grids started to show meaningful improvement…
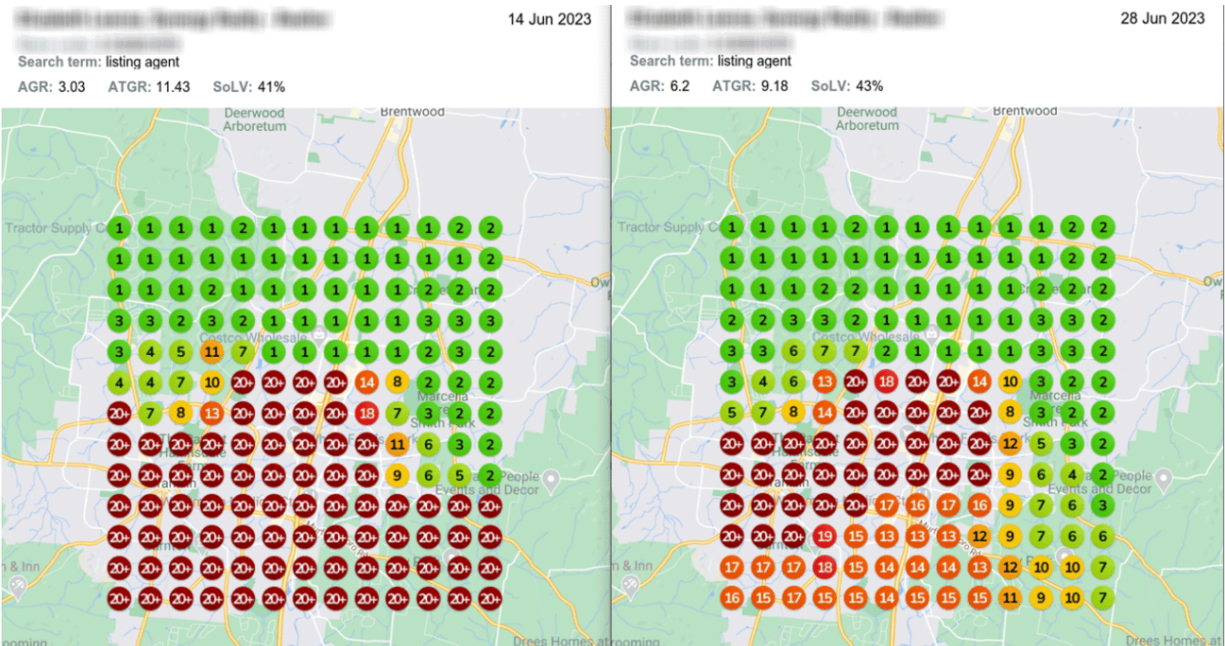
These results are all because of the CTR manipulation through GBP post interactions. Next we plan to test out other types of CTR actions to see which give us the biggest impact.

Test Update: July 21, 2023

Since our last update, we've continued our tests, carefully monitoring the results, taking notes, and refining our approach. Here are the results for each of the listings:

Hawaii Accountant Listing

The accountant listing maintained elevated visibility as shown in the grids below. By steadily continuing the emulated visits towards these GBPs, we maintained the ranking over the last week. However, there was an exception for one category of service queries.

Although these queries' rankings increased a bit, it was not enough to make a difference with the inbound leads coming in for them. Below are the grids for each keyword after 1 week…

"Payroll Services Honolulu"
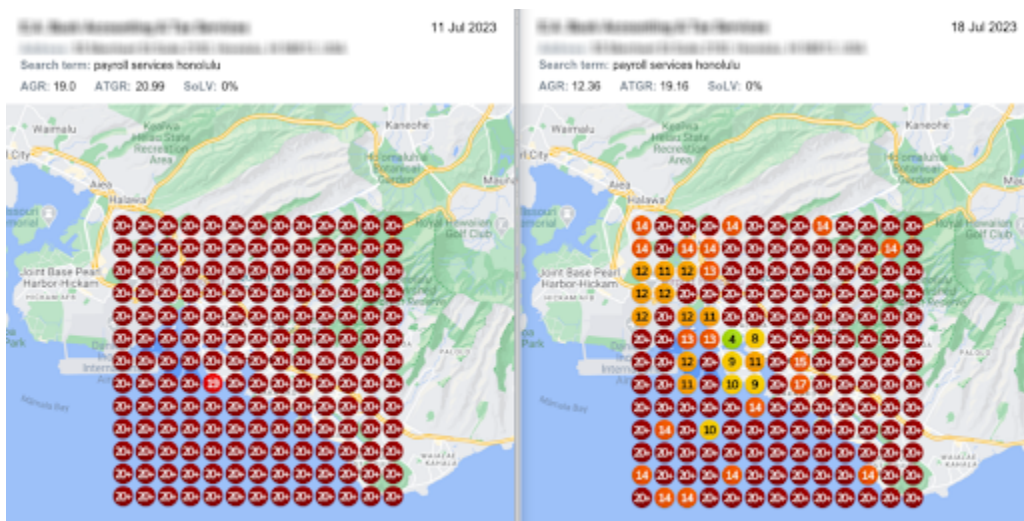
"Accountant Honolulu"
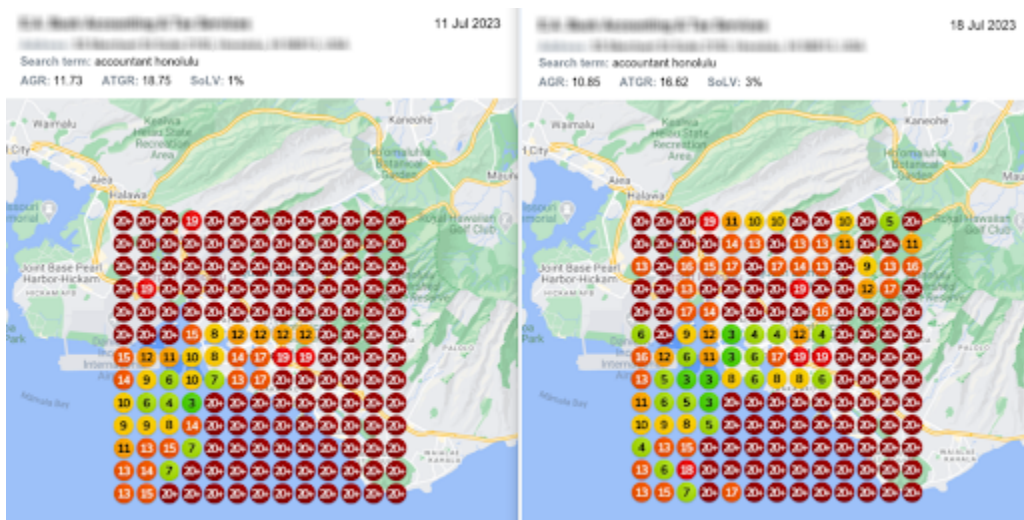
Franklin Realtor Listing

Just like the accountant GBP listing, we saw a small increase in visibility in the maps after performing more CTR work.

Some ranking improvements landed the listing in the map pack! It is more obvious if you compare the metrics such as ATGR, but we can still confirm that **emulated traffic has a level of effectiveness with increasing visibility**. That is, as long as there weren't any other factors influencing the GBPs. Below are grid comparisons for our main tracked keywords.

"Realtor Franklin"
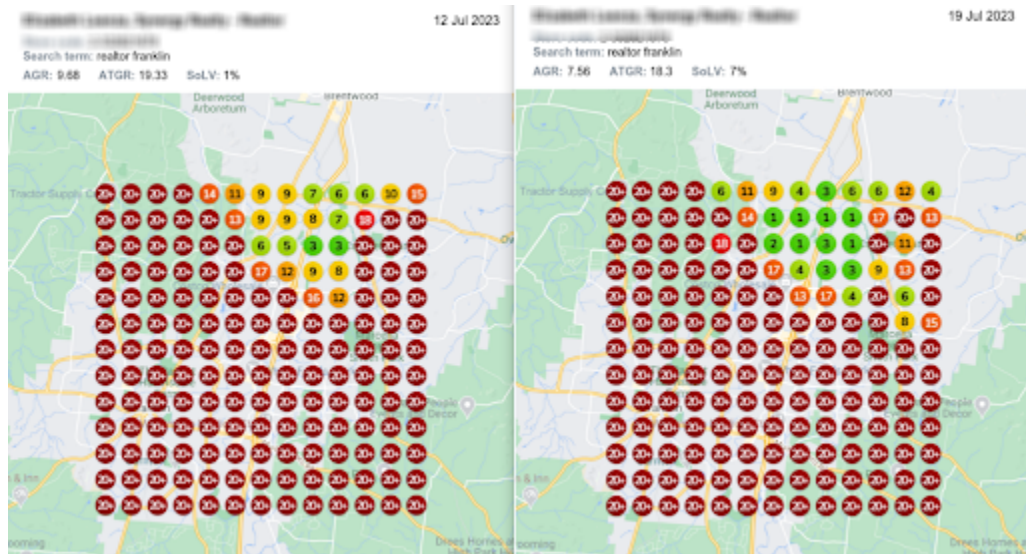
"Listing Agent"
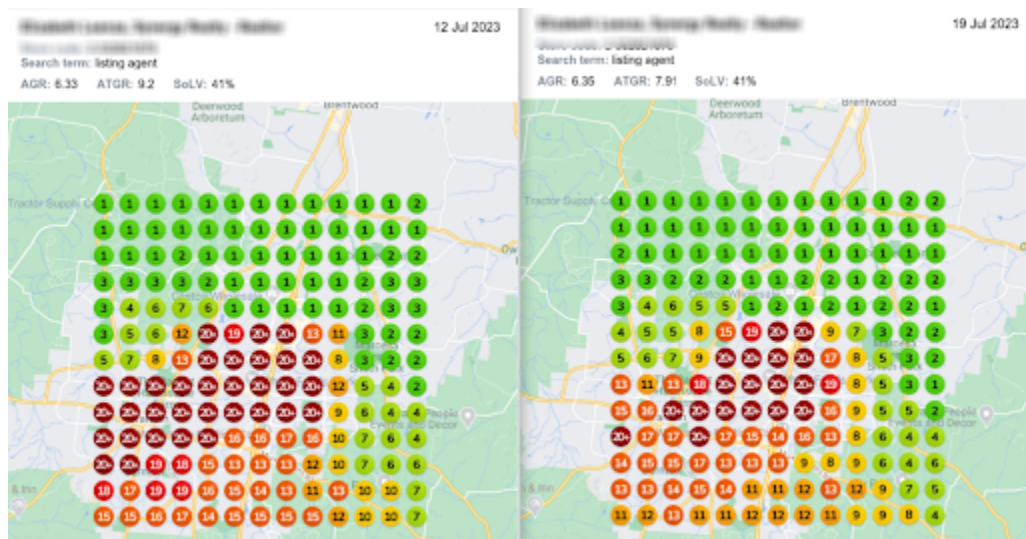
Next we reviewed the organic ranking movements for websites connected to the listings.

Organic Ranking Movements For The Website's Pages

Looking into the **Accountant** site, we could confirm the organic rankings were **overall stagnant** as far as identifying any ranking movement or trends when looking at the entire domain.

There was no active link building being done for the accountant domain, or any other On Page/Off Page that might be included in SEO services. There were no new reviews published on either GBPs within this period.

However, we did notice a specific set of queries that had dropped.

Upon further inspection, it happened to also be the one category of service queries that were **experiencing drops in organic search rankings** over the last 3 months (according to ahrefs).

This set of queries shown below are the weakest (of this domain), in regards to organic rankings/traffic, of the ones we are tracking.

Keyword	SF	Volume	KD	CPC	Traffic	Change	Paid	Position	Change	URL
+ honolulu bookkeeping	3	10	1	7.38	0	-1	0	5 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ bookkeeper service	3	150	39	11.08	0		0	40 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ bookkeepers service	4	90	39	11.08	0		0	48 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ bookkeeper services	5	300	37	11.08	0		0	55 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ bookkeeping office	3	40	11	4.26	0		0	57 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ bookkeeping service	3	4.5K	38	11.08	0		0	65 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ bookkeepers services	4	70	39	11.08	0		0	69 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ what are bookkeeping services	2	70	16	3.34	0		0	63 → ·	Lost 🔗	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ bookeeping service	5	40	38	11.08	0		0	65 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾
+ finding a bookkeeper	5	10	11	15.49	0		0	69 → ·	Lost	com/honolulu-bookkeeping/ ▾

And here are the geogrid developments over the testing period…

Search term: honolulu bookkeeping services
AGR: 9.18   ATGR: 11.49   SoLV: 11%
27 Jun 2023

Search term: honolulu bookkeeping services
AGR: 15.65   ATGR: 20.37   SoLV: 0%
20 Jul 2023
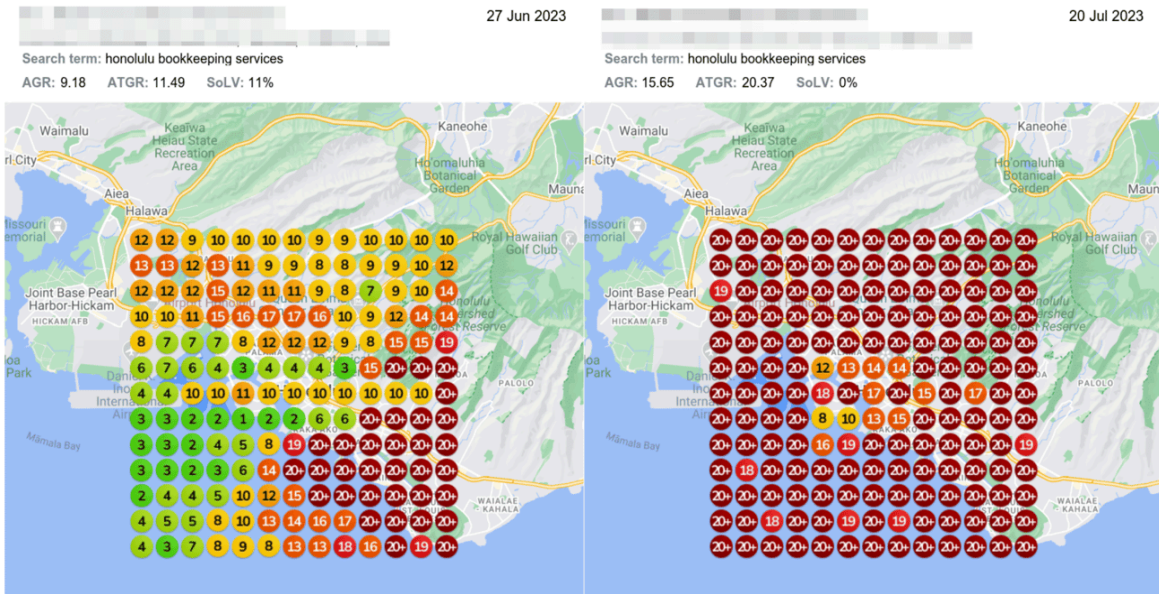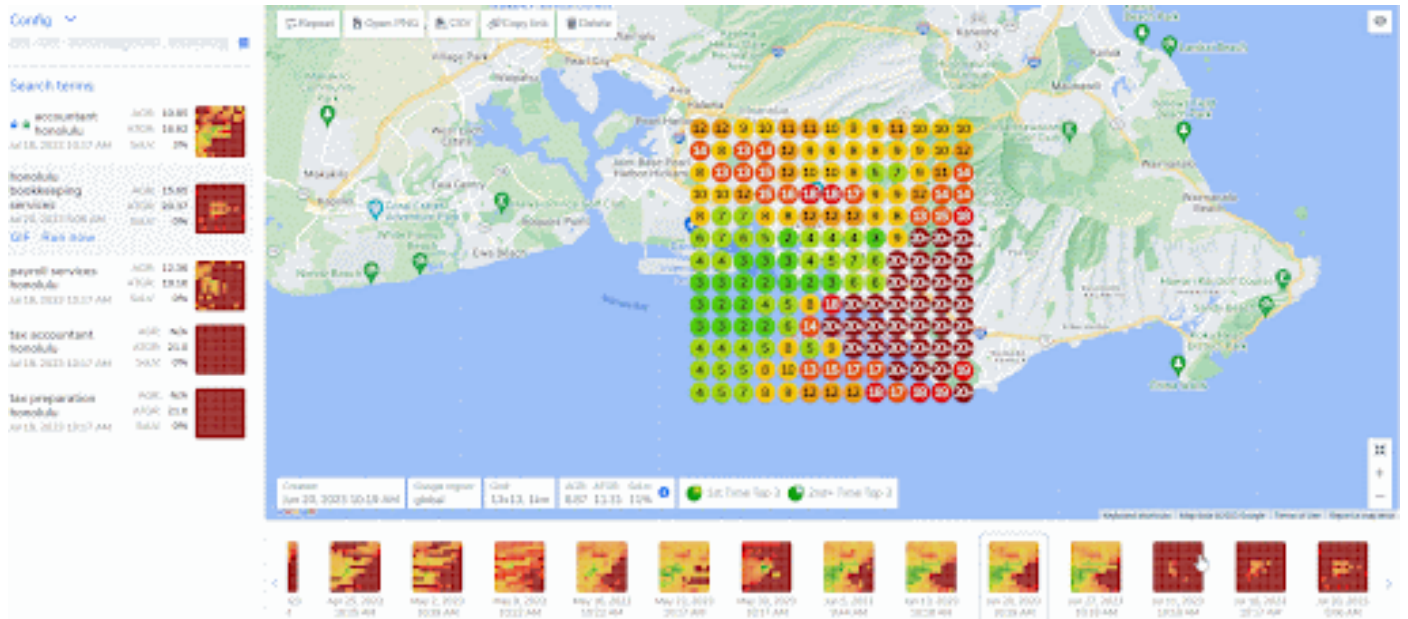
These results mean the emulated traffic and CTR manipulation being done positively impact local visibility in the short term, but may not be a feasible long-term strategy if there is no attention provided on the website side of the campaign.

So far, this test focused on strategic engagement with Google, revolving around those specific keywords and triggering local pack results. By interacting with the Google Business Profile, we've shown measurable improvements.

Next, we increased the frequency of our engagements - we started with only 3 emulated interactions per day for our GBPs. We are going to crank up the frequency and see what it does.

Test Update: [August 4, 2023](#)

It's been three months since we began our CTR and Google Business Profile tests, so we're feeling more comfortable drawing conclusions from our results.

Below we walk through the before and after grids for each keyword.

Keyword #1: Listing Agent

This term saw movement from the beginning, but the final results demonstrate the power of CTR. In nearly 4 months, ATGR went from a dismal 15.0 to 7.91 with only CTR!

It's worth noting though, this grid is in a less competitive target area though, making movement easier.
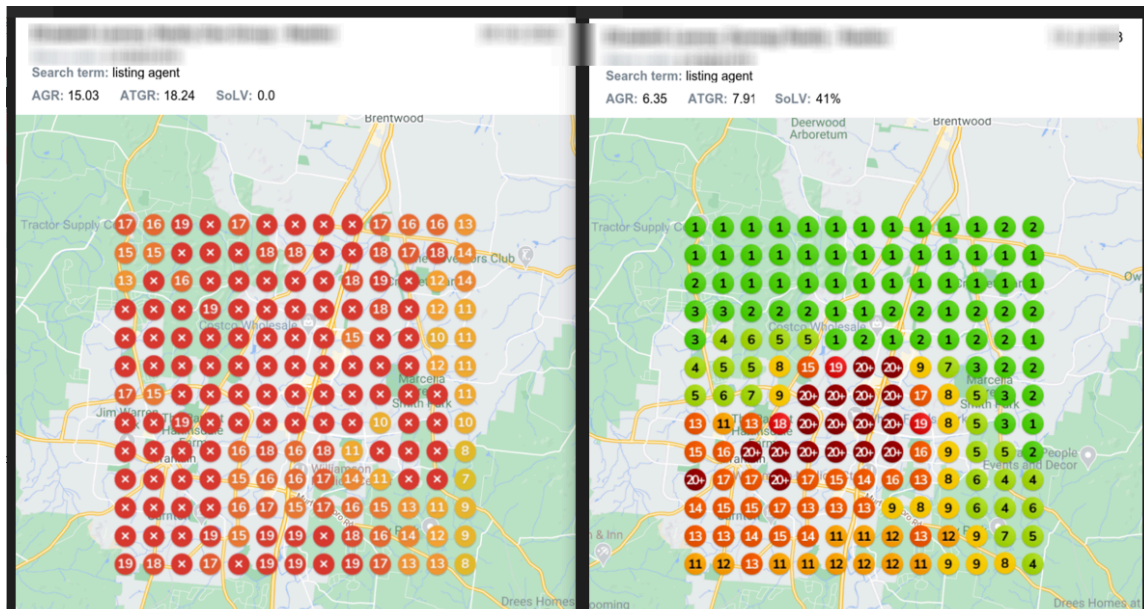
Keyword #2: Realtor Franklin

While this keyword didn't see as much movement, we can still see map pack rankings in the most competitive part of the grid.
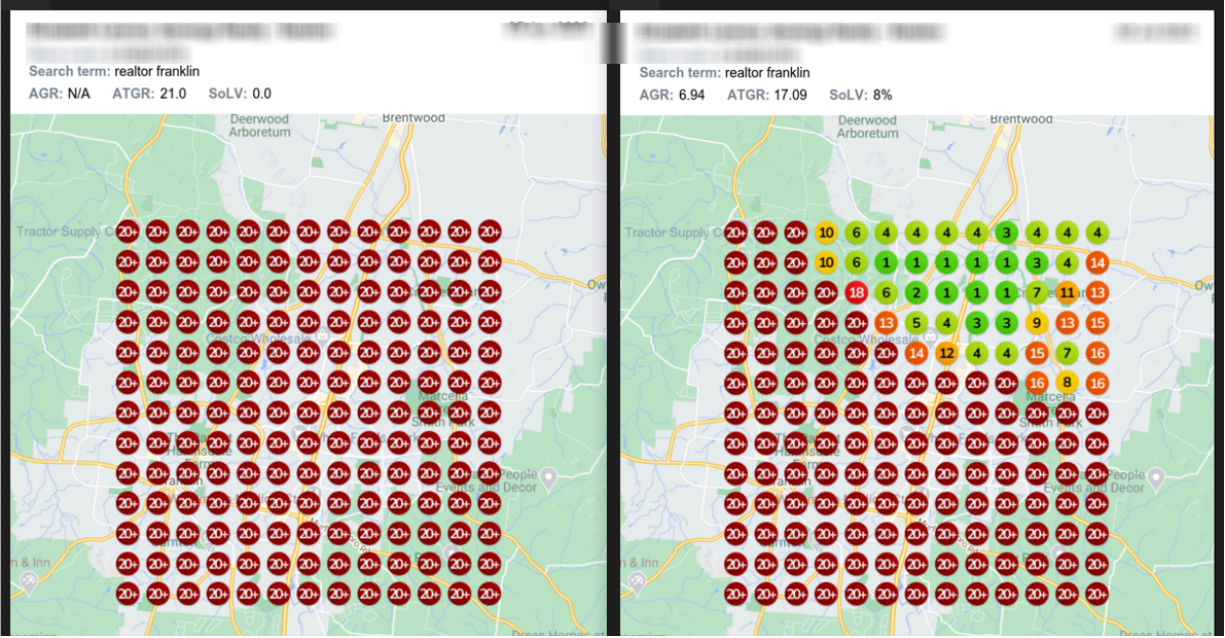
Now let's move on to our Hawaii listing…

Keyword #3: Accountant Honolulu

Some of the top rankings are out in the ocean, but you can still see strong movement in the majority of the grid. Many nodes in position 4-5 are in competitive areas.

Keyword #4: Payroll services Honolulu

This test term showed the least movement of all our grids, but many nodes jumped 10+ spots. This keyword also had weaker visibility starting out… AGTR was only 10.5 when we began the test.

Take from these results that CTR should not be used as a standalone strategy. If you are going to put our tests into action, make sure you're supporting it with solid SEO basics like building the brand and relevance.

We used a two-pronged strategy, involving both search engine manipulation and simulated user engagement. For this test, we leveraged a CTR tool to speed up the process. This is how we used the tool…

The tool takes the target keyword and searches for your listing in maps. Once it's found the profile, it goes through the GBP posts and engages, goes back to the Profile, and hits the website link. Next, it simulates reading a page for about 30 seconds and simulates the same process 2 more times on 2 different pages (you can set up it to interact with 5, 10, or 15 pages…). In the end, it leaves the website and continues the same process with each target keyword, as frequently as configured, ensuring all keywords are covered efficiently.

We tested this exact process with the CTR tool 4 times, and we consistently **saw a ranking impact within 7-10 days on average**. Some CTR rounds gave us quicker results, but we couldn't pinpoint a reason for this.

While we can't put a numerical value on the impact of CTR, the success of this test reinforces our confidence in CTR to increase rankings and visibility.

It's important to keep in mind that you can't manufacture engagements willy-nilly. The effectiveness of CTR lies in combining meticulous keyword selection, simulated engagement, and strategic Google interactions to boost CTR.

How Long Do Ranking Gains Last After CTR Work?

Test Update: October 27, 2023

After stopping the CTR work, we were curious to see how the rankings fared. *How long would ranking gains hold without additional CTR?* This CTR test began on April 3rd, starting with virtually 0 visibility…
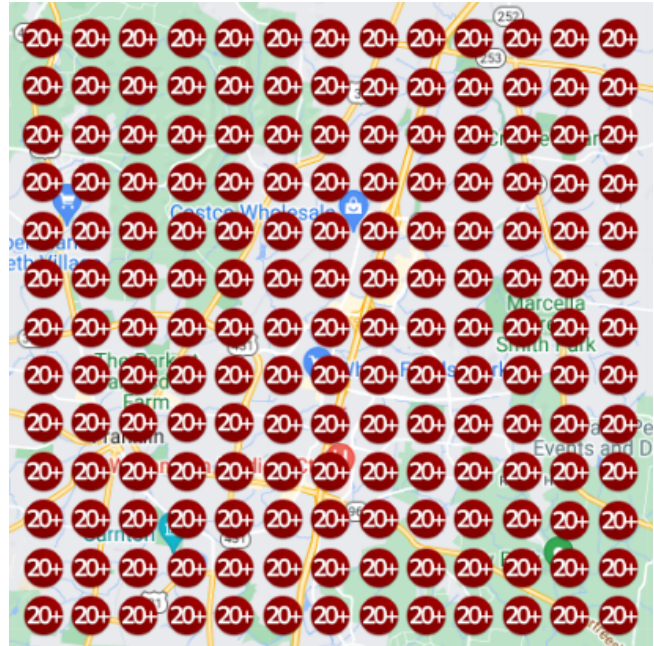
Realtor + City"

"Our last CTR run with this keyword finished on July 26th, 2023. At the time of the wrap-up, rankings were on the upswing after 4 rounds of CTR. Here is the grid:

After 3 months of no CTR work and here is where the listing rankings were:

We encountered a minor decline in maps rankings, but we think these rankings held pretty well! There was less negative movement than we initially expected…

Accountant + City

On May 8th we began testing CTR for this "accountant + city" term. Here is what the grid looked like at the start of the test.
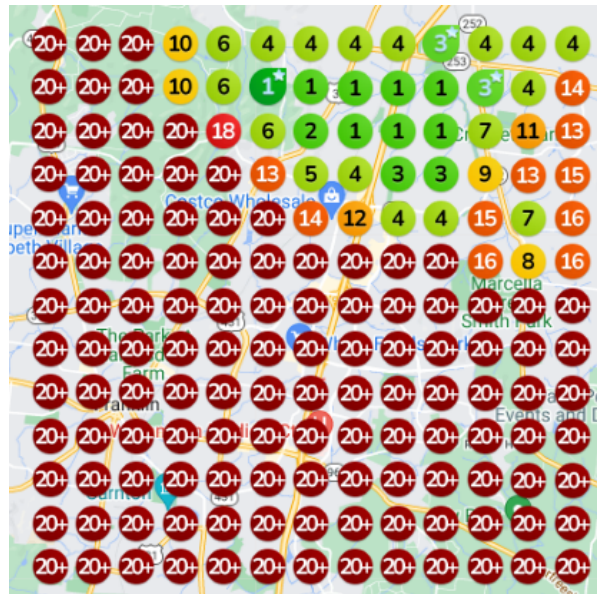
We ran the last CTR test on August 1st, resulting in more growth than we expected…
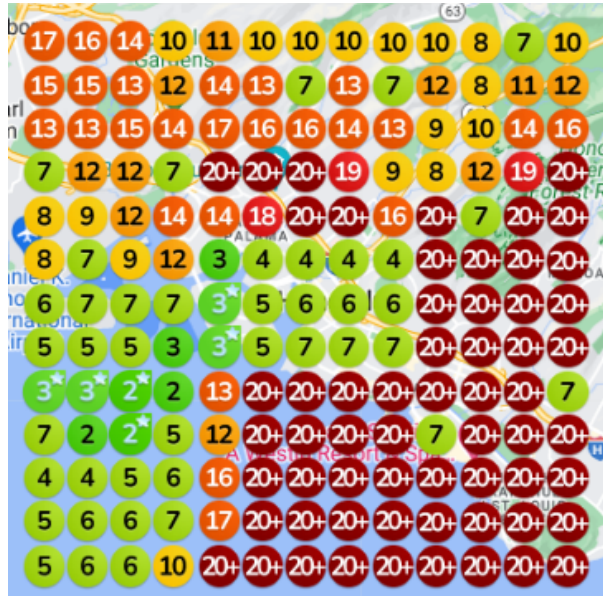
After nearly 3 months, a minor decrease in rankings was observed, albeit less pronounced than in the other test listing.
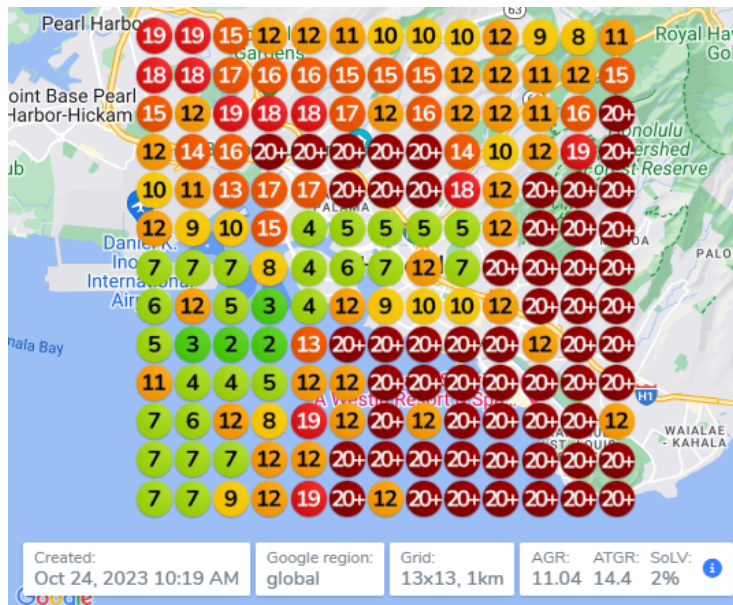
"Payroll Services + city"

We began CTR for this term on May 22nd with weak grids…
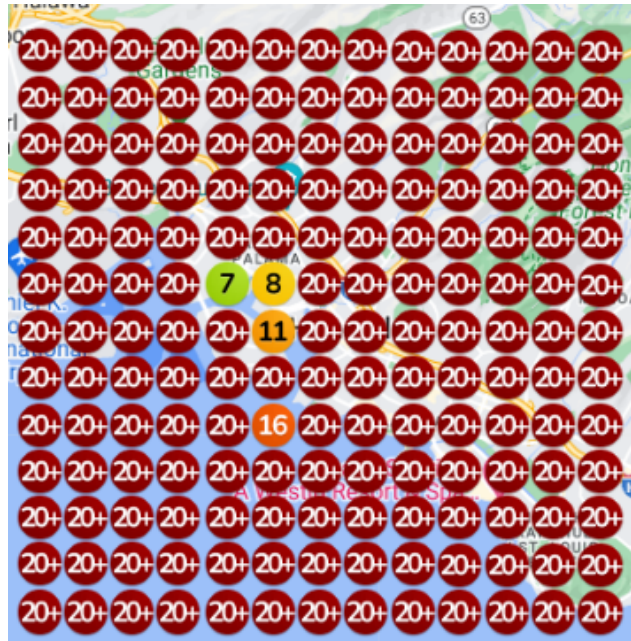
After CTR work ended on August 8th, geogrids had expanded.
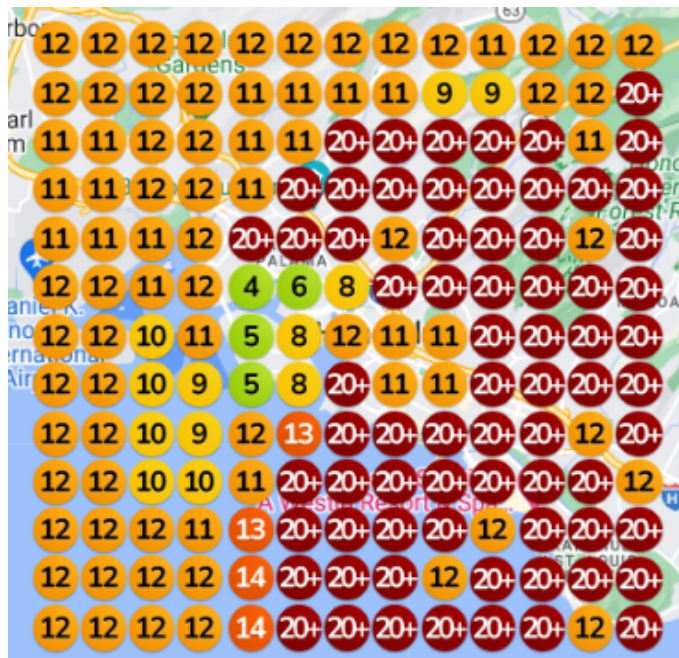
Unexpectedly, even after we completed all CTR work, we continued to see increased rankings for this term. Even 3 months after any CTR work was completed, rankings were still on the rise!

Created:	Google region:	Grid:	AGR: ATGR: SoLV:
Oct 24, 2023 10:19 AM	global	13x13, 1km	9.62 14.8 0%
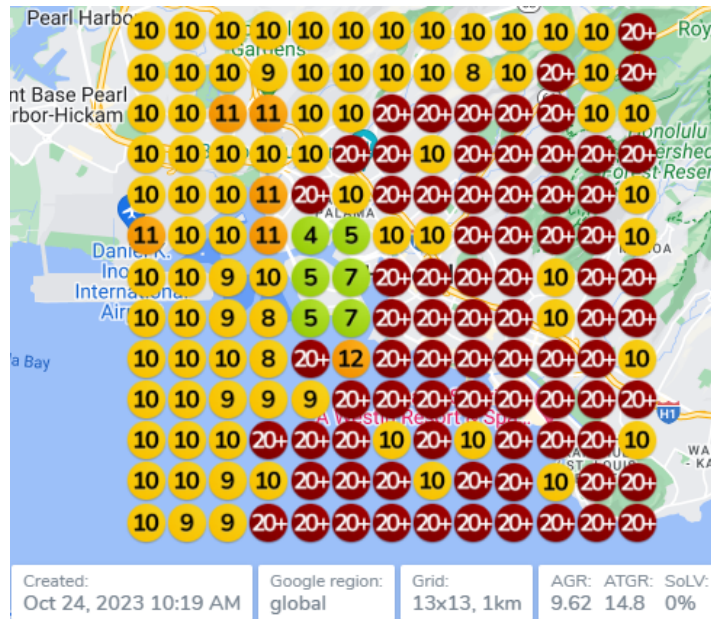
The results from these tests suggest that CTR manipulation can push (and sustain) rankings in a variety of population sizes and niches, which is encouraging!

Based on our research, CTR is an effective tool to add to your SEO strategy. But, we don't recommend relying on it too much.

How Much Can Press Releases Impact Rankings?

Test Setup:

We ran a press release from Web 2.0 Ranker, specifically the AP News Brand Feature w/ Yahoo Finance and MarketWatch + Do-Follow Syndication and we added on the Add Targeted Media Outreach to 1k Journalists.

The release was about a government rule going into effect at the beginning of 2024, so it was somewhat newsworthy.
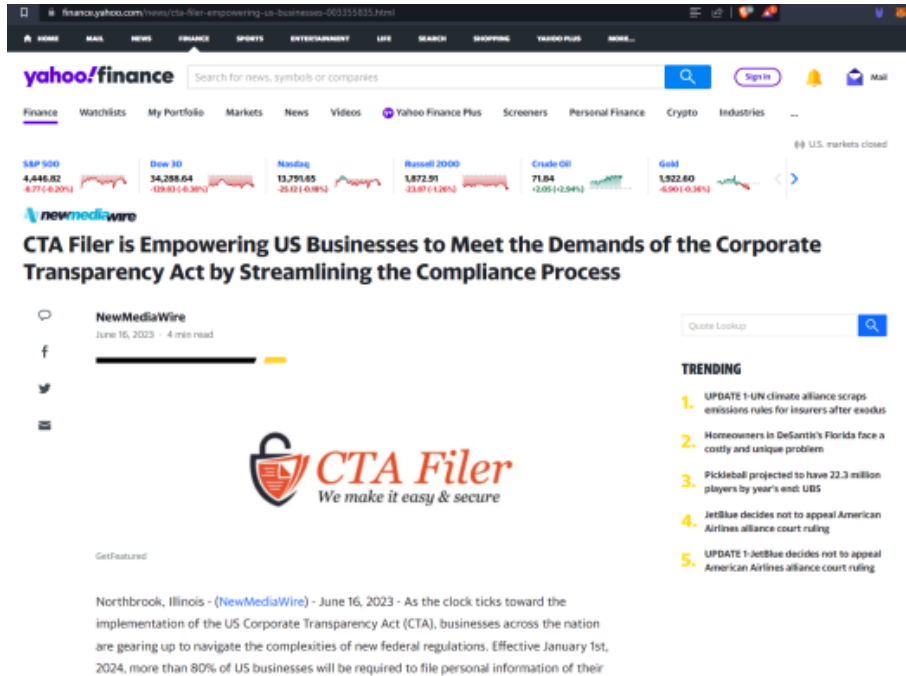
This setup gave our press release the widest reach possible.

Test Update: July 7, 2023

2 days after the press release was published and syndicated we saw results…

First, we checked the keywords the Yahoo! press release was ranking for, which you can see in the screenshot below. Most of our target terms were on page 1.

We then looked at the terms and rankings for our main target site to see if there was any correlation. Sure enough, the same keywords ranking the Yahoo! PR also began to show an increase for the main target site.

We're unsure if the ranking increases and keyword correlation was caused by the NAP or links in the press release, but we can see the correlation between the PR and rankings of the target site.

Test Update: August 18, 2023

We are returning to one of our previous PR tests to look at how Google's new AI snippets have responded…

Google has been testing AI-generated responses to see how they impact the users' search experience. This section is now appearing at the very top of Google and could become a significant source of traffic and optimization opportunities in the future.
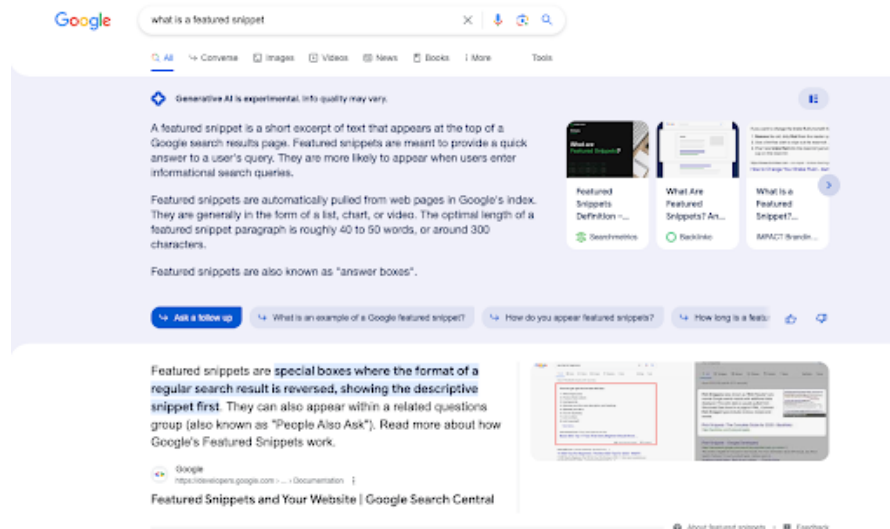
There is still a lot of speculation as to how Google chooses its sources when generating these AI responses, however, we were surprised to find that our recent PR directly impacted the AI results.

In the previous test, we were looking at the impact press releases have on your website's organic rankings. We had found a strong correlation in the rankings of the PR and the website

rankings but were surprised when we started noticing AI-generated responses that were pulling out company info from the branded press release….
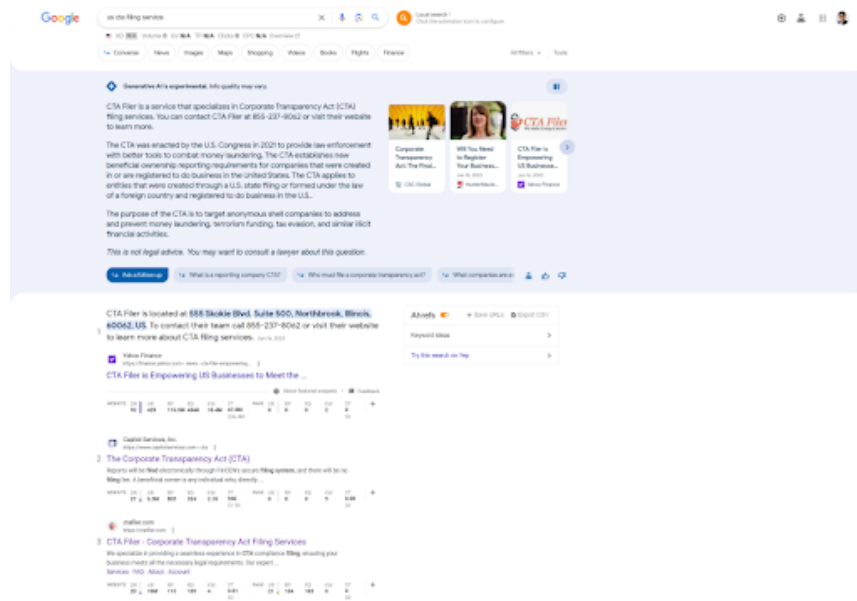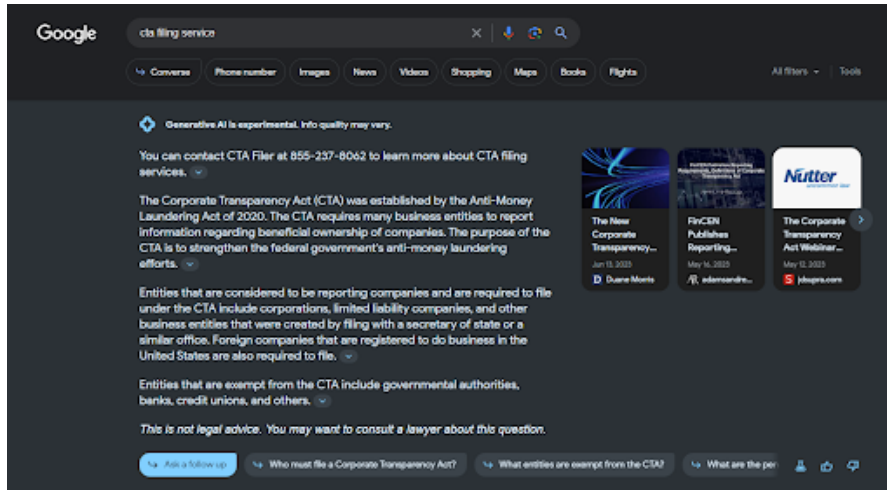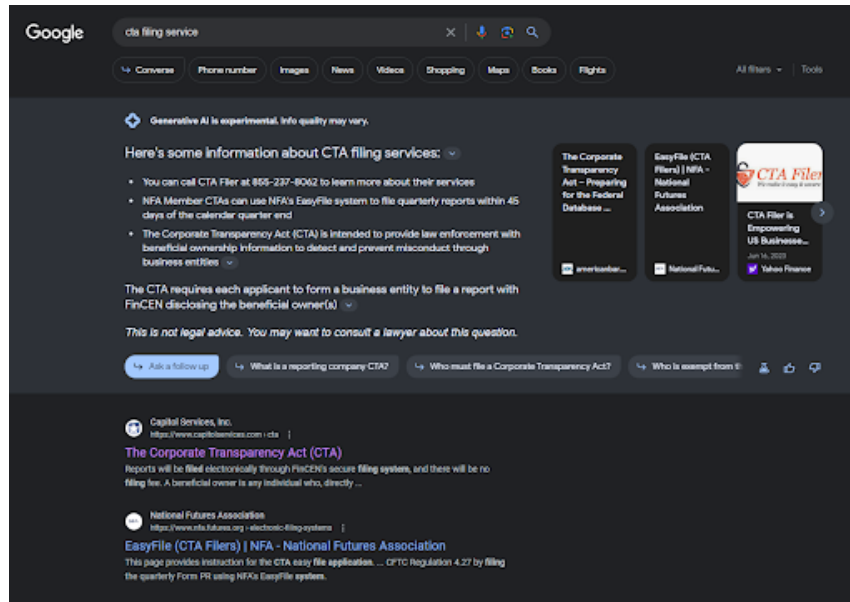
Although we don't know exactly how Google chooses a website to use when generating AI responses, it is apparent that the Google News section seems to carry some kind of weight. This would make sense since Google wants to ensure all AI responses are the most recent information available.

Between the AI-generated responses pulling our company information along with the website's rankings correlating with the rankings of the PR itself, it's clear that optimizing your PRs for target terms is an important part of your SEO strategy, as well as validating their effectiveness.

| us cta compliance service | 6 ▲ 5 | 5 ▲ 1 |
| us cta filing service | 3 ▲ 0 | 3 ▲ 0 |

But of course, we want to keep testing to ensure we fully understand the impacts of PR on SEO, and more importantly, how to enhance our PR optimization so we get even better results.

Test Update: November 10, 2023

It's been nearly three months since our last update on our PR test with CTA Filer to see "How Much Do Press Releases Impact Rankings?"

Nearly 5 months after publishing, the Yahoo! Finance press release continues to hold the featured snippet for the search term, "us cta filing service". While this isn't entirely shocking, it does demonstrate the power authoritative press features can bring.
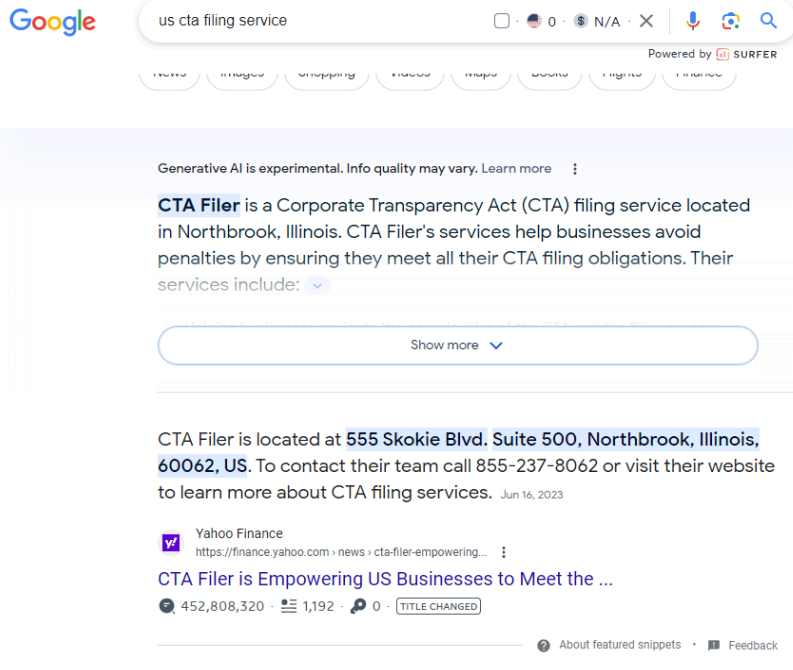
But we wanted to focus more on how press releases impact rankings. So, we compared current organic rankings a week after publishing the release (6/23/23) to the time of this update…

Keyword	SF	Volume	KD	CPC	Traffic	Change	Paid	Position	Change
+ cta filing	2	40	7	0.00	0		0	45 → 47	▼2
+ cta requirements	4	20	27	0.00	0		0	57 → ×	Lost
+ cta prep	2	20	42	N/A	0		0	70 → ×	Lost
+ cta business	1	40	77	0.00	0		0	× → 92	New

You can see the press release was ranking for more organic keywords a week after publishing. However, the release also gained a new keyword since our last update on 8/18 – "cta business".

We also reviewed the organic rankings of the target website, comparing rankings now to rankings right after the release was published.

Keyword	SF	Volume	KD	CPC	Traffic	Change	Paid	Position	Change	URL
+ filing compliance solution services	2	50	1	5.04	1	+1	0	× → 10	New	https://ctafiler.com/services/ ▾
+ cta prep	2	20	27	N/A	0		0	× → 19	New	https://ctafiler.com/product/cta-prep-kit/ ▾
+ cta exemptions	3	30	3	0.00	0		0	× → 20	New	https://ctafiler.com/exemptions/ ▾ 1 more
+ affidavit of beneficial ownership	2	50	0	0.78	0		0	74 → 42	▲32	https://ctafiler.com/affidavit/ ▾
+ corporate transparency act exemptions	2	70	1	N/A	0		0	× → 48	New	https://ctafiler.com/exemptions/ ▾
+ cta regulations	1	40	5	0.49	0		0	× → 47	New	https://ctafiler.com/regulations/ ▾
+ filing compliance solution	2	80	0	5.49	0		0	× → 66	New	https://ctafiler.com/services/ ▾
+ cta filing	2	40	7	0.00	0		0	13 → 95	▼82	https://ctafiler.com/product/cta-filing/ ▾
										⊡ https://ctafiler.com/what-next/ ▾

The target site gained 6 new organic keywords since publishing the release, with one at the bottom of page 1!

The ONLY other work done since publishing the release was one large AI content piece about beneficial ownership. While not all keywords directly correlate with the release, the correlation between website rankings and press releases underscores the importance of optimizing press releases for target keywords.

Follow Up Test Variation on Press Impact on Rankings

Test Update: December 22, 2023

In this follow up test variation, we ran a PR for a blockchain project. The project had a very competitive brand name "Koin Crew" which was the name of a well-known news station team. Our text project itself is built on a newer blockchain that still has some competitive keywords in the cryptocurrency space.

We wanted to target the main industry terms with the PR, as well as brand the website for the name "Koin Crew".

The PR was run on December 11th, 2023 and was syndicated on 400+ sites, like Yahoo Finance.

https://finance.yahoo.com/news/koin-crew-spearheads-revolutionary-koinos-012700275.html

Almost immediately after syndication, we discovered our PR ranking for "Koin Crew" brand kw.

Interestingly, it was Global New Wire, not Yahoo Finance, that was performing well this time.

And we can now see the website ranking for the brand as well.

koin crew

Check frequency:	Language:	Search location:	Track URL:		Place ID:
two days	en	Chicago, IL, USA	https://koincrew.com/		

Keywords	Organic	Mobile	ⓘ Local	ⓘ GeoGrid	
koin crew	8 ▲13	7 ▲2	N/a	N/a	⋮
koinos token tracking	8 ▲0	>100	N/a	N/a	⋮

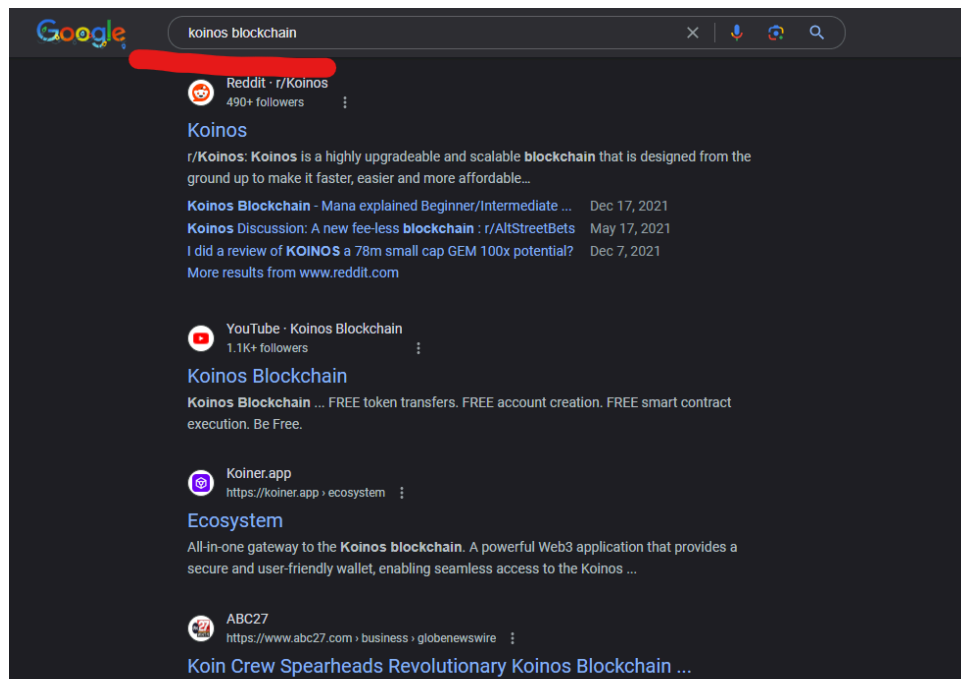But when we started to look up our other target terms, we saw a variety of different sites ranking:

"Koinos Projects":
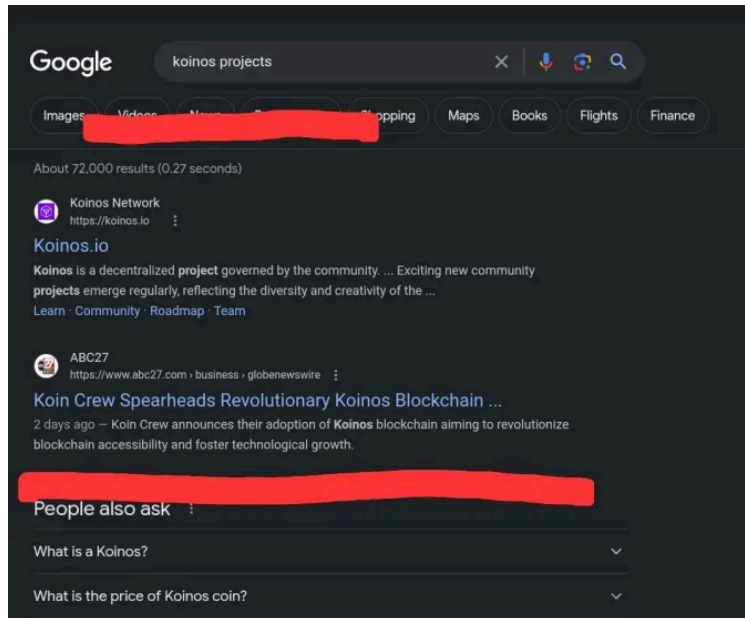
"Koinos News":
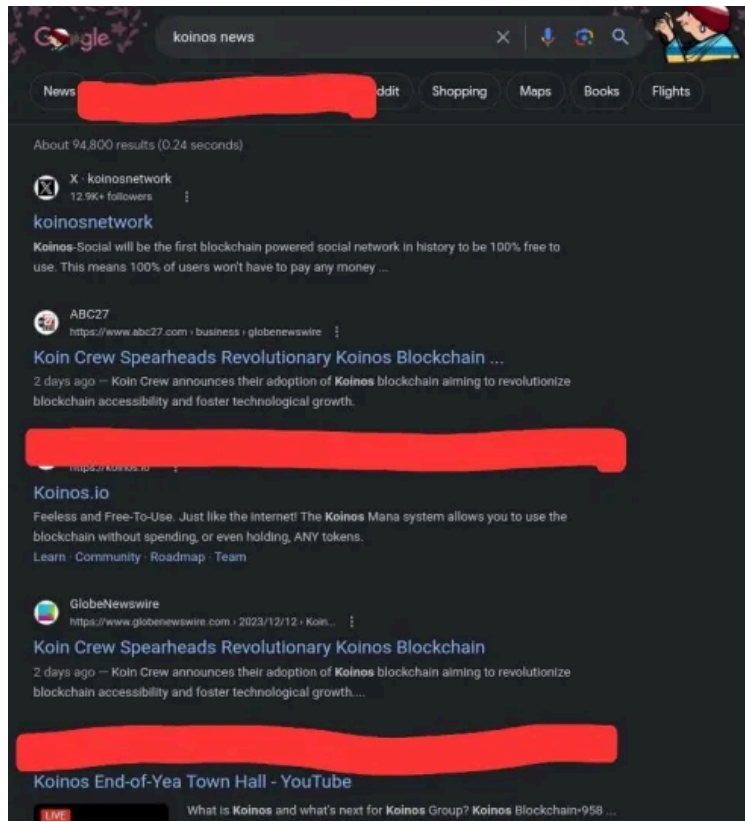
"Koinos Blockchain":

The Yahoo PR also showed at number 14 for "Koinos Blockchain", but 2 different Yahoo PRs were ranking for different terms:

With the primary one showing for just "Koinos":

This all started to show within the first week of running the PR, but unlike our last PR test, many of our PR rankings have yet to correlate to website rankings aside from one of the exact anchors we used in the PR to link to our website:

In a significant advancement of this mission, they have recently launched its first beta application, specifically designed for Koinos token tracking on the blockchain. This application represents a major mi████████████████ ███hey, making the Koinos blockchain more transparent with real-time monitoring and soon, management of digital assets. The introduction of the free token tracking application is a testament to Koin Crew's commitment to delivering tangible, user-friendly solutions within the blockchain ecosystem, no matter how simple the MVP.

"Koinos token tracking" and "Koin Crew" are the only terms that seem to have been impacted by the PR. However, there is no direct link for the term "Koin Crew" in the PR, other than the URL links in the NAP at the bottom.

This leads us to believe that the branding (PR title and NAP reference) primarily impacts brand terms on the website whereas organic commercial terms are mostly impacted by the actual links in the PR. This is of course organic only. In previous tests, we have seen a stronger correlation between local geo grids and the PR optimization itself.

We did use the primary commercial terms for the project in the PR to link directly to their website which is not usually recommended, however in this case, it seems to be performing well. We will continue to monitor its progress and report back the organic impacts.

What is the Ranking Impact of Creating Topically Relevant, Optimized Content v Building Links?

Test Setup:

The first portion of our new test set up focuses on the ranking impact of on-page techniques, including:
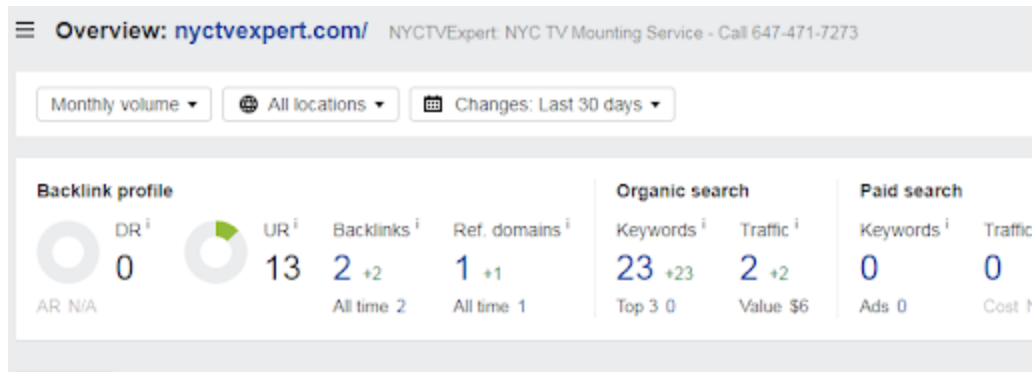
- On-page optimization
- Internal linking
- Consistently producing topically relevant content

We built an entirely new website targeting TV mounting services in NYC. This website included 32 pages of content + 2 blog posts per day.

The website launched September 1st with our testing team consistently adding new, topically relevant blog posts. That's it. No link building, just content and on-page optimizations.

Test Update: September 22, 2023

After 3 weeks of consistently publishing and optimizing content, you can see the overall impact. Screenshots were pulled Thursday, September 21st.

We started to see the website rank organically for quite a few locally relevant keywords.

We achieved these initial ranking increases without *any* link-building or other SEO efforts. We weren't surprised to see relevance start to pop, but some of these organic rankings are **higher than we expected**, especially considering the target area.

Test Update: October 6, 2023

It's been a little over a month since we launched the initial website. During this time, the team has been feverishly building blog posts (2-3 posts per business day) and performing on-page to the existing content. At the time of reporting, we had built 37 blog posts for the site.

Almost exactly one month after the website launch, we began to see some promising results. 39 keywords are now ranking on our site, a significant improvement from virtually no keywords ranking previously.
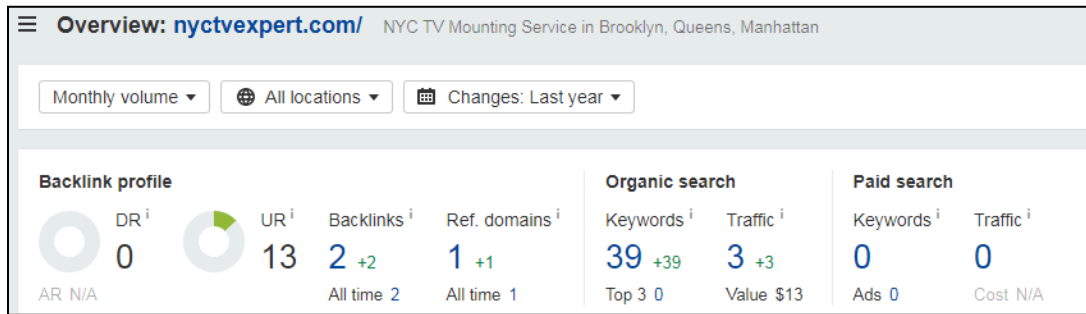
Surprisingly, many of the terms were ranked on page 2!

These aren't obscure, low-volume terms. We're talking about keywords with meaningful volume in the bustling NYC scene…

These ranking changes are pretty new… just popping up in the last couple of days. Before that, we hadn't seen much movement.

So it's taken just over 30 blog posts to build the topical relevance that enabled the site to rank.

Keyword	SF	Volume	KD	CPC	Traffic	Change	Paid	Position	Change	URL			Updated ▾
☐ + best tv mounts for 55 inch tv	2	50	38	0.48	0		0	× → 35	New	https://nyctvexpert.com/best-tv-mounts-for-55-inch-screens/ ▾	⤳ ▾	SERP ▾	11 h ago
☐ + nyc tv mounting service	3	150	8	4.34	1	+1	0	× → 17	New	https://nyctvexpert.com/ ▾	⤳ ▾	SERP ▾	13 h ago
☐ + tv wall mount installation nyc	3	20	8	4.08	0		0	× → 23	New	https://nyctvexpert.com/ ▾	⤳ ▾	SERP ▾	22 h ago
☐ + tv mounting staten island	3	20	0	1.93	0		0	× → 49	New	https://nyctvexpert.com/ ▾	⤳ ▾	SERP ▾	22 h ago

While not all keywords were showing as high, the sheer number of keywords the website became relevant for demonstrated some promising results.

The key is consistency though. Even though this test listing is located in a highly competitive area, we were able to push pretty strong rankings by just creating optimized content.

Test Update: October 20, 2023

Despite not building a single link, we have seen rankings grow faster than anticipated in a highly competitive market – NYC.

As of writing the update (October 18th), our organic keywords had risen to 44.
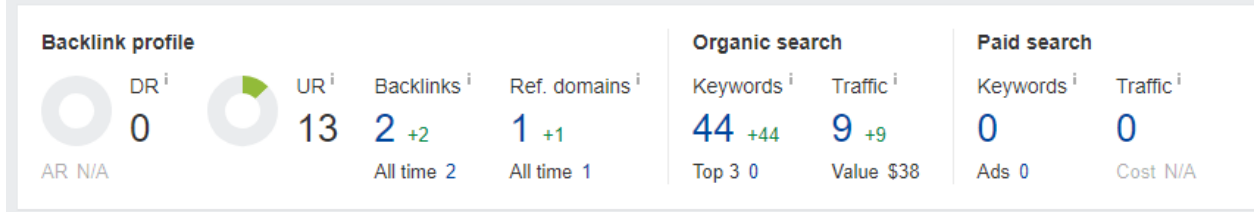
We'd also lost a few keywords during this time too though…

We suspect the initial relevance gained after publishing or optimizing new content pieces increased rankings. But once that content lost freshness and links weren't built to it, the rankings may have tapered off.

But back to good news, many of the keywords had increased 10-20 positions since the last update. At the time of our last update (Oct. 4th), we only had 5 keywords in positions 11-20.
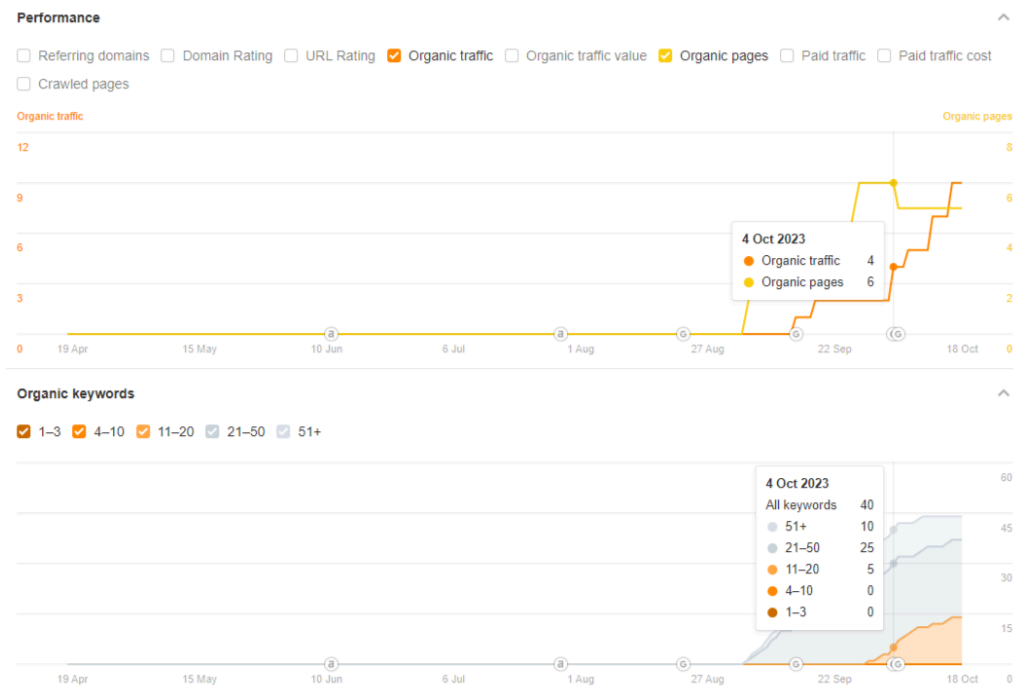
But now, we had 14 keywords in positions 11-20. Some of these newly higher-ranked keywords had moved up from positions 21-50, but others had shot up from 51+.
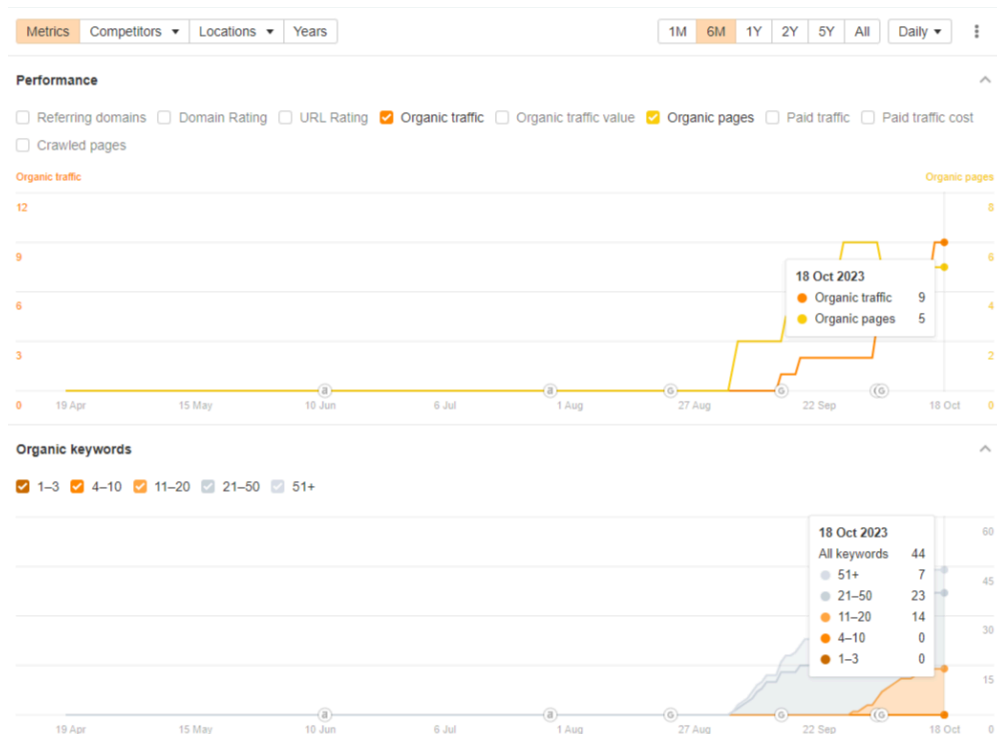
Below are the keywords that were ranking at position 20 or above:

Keyword	SF	Volume	KD	CPC	Traffic	Paid	Position ▲
+ tv installation nyc	4	100	7	4.26	2	0	12
+ tv mount service nyc	2	40	8	4.34	0	0	15
+ mount tv nyc	6	30	8	3.75	0	0	15
+ best tv mounting service nyc	2	30	8	4.70	0	0	15
+ tv mounting service nyc	2	200	8	4.34	2	0	15
+ nyc tv installation	4	40	7	4.26	0	0	16
+ nyc tv mounting service	3	150	8	4.34	1	0	17
+ tv mounting service manhattan	2	30	8	3.18	0	0	17
+ tv mounting services nyc	3	10	8	4.34	0	0	17
+ tv mounting service new york	2	30	8	3.26	0	0	17
+ tv installation new york	3	20	7	4.41	0	0	18
+ tv mounting new york	3	30	8	2.91	0	0	19
+ tv mounting services brooklyn	4	50	8	4.46	0	0	20
+ tv mount nyc	5	70	8	3.75	0	0	20

To better illustrate the ranking improvement since our last update, we pulled rankings on October 18 compared to rankings on October 4th – our last data pull.

Keyword	SF	Volume	KD	CPC	Traffic	Change	Paid	Position	Change
+ tv mounting service nyc	2	200	8	4.34	2	+2	0	67 → 15	▲52
+ tv mounting services brooklyn	4	50	8	4.46	0		0	55 → 20	▲35
+ nyc tv mounting	3	250	8	3.75	0		0	21 → 23	▼2
+ tv mount for apartment	3	150	3	0.42	0		0	82 → 89	▼7
+ tv installation nyc	4	100	7	4.26	2	+2	0	× → 12	New
+ tv mount in apartment	2	30	2	0.42	0		0	94 → 93	▲1
+ best tv mount for 55 inch tv	5	60	39	0.48	0		0	× → 39	New
+ tv mounting nyc	4	250	8	3.75	1		0	21	
+ expert tv mounting	4	50	0	2.25	0		0	56 → 59	▼3
+ tv mounting manhattan	4	40	8	1.02	0		0	27 → 28	▼1
+ nyc tv mounting services	2	30	8	4.34	0		0	24 → 22	▲2
+ best 55 inch tv wall mount	4	80	27	0.46	0		0	× → 38	New
+ tv installation new york	3	20	7	4.41	0		0	× → 18	New
+ tv mounting service brooklyn	2	60	13	4.46	0		0	46 → 26	▲20
+ tv mounting service manhattan	2	30	8	3.18	0		0	32 → 17	▲15
+ tv mount nyc	5	70	8	3.75	0		0	33 → 20	▲13
+ tv mount service nyc	2	40	8	4.34	0		0	25 → 15	▲10
+ nyc tv mounts	5	30	8	3.81	0		0	29 → 22	▲7
+ apartment tv mount	3	100	2	0.42	0		0	× → 89	New
+ mount tv nyc	6	30	8	3.75	0		0	× → 15	New
+ best mount for 55 inch tv	3	20	28	0.39	0		0	× → 28	New

Moreover, our homepage has emerged as a key player in ranking gains as blog content supports its relevance. The majority of keywords are ranking on the homepage. **Topical relevance is building around the homepage from supporting blog post content**, but these blog posts are also ranking - landing on pages 3-4 for longer-tail search terms.
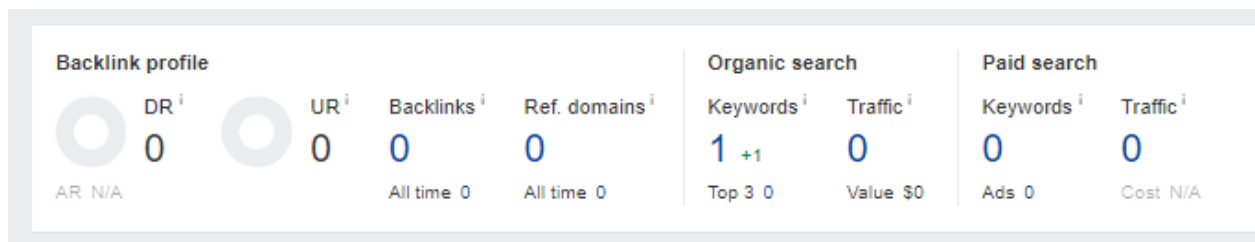
While we cannot draw any solid conclusions yet, it's clear that topically relevant blog content and on-page optimization are important aspects of any SEO campaign. All of this has been achieved without any link-building efforts.

How Strong is the Impact of Citations and Signals in Map Rankings?

Test Setup: October 13, 2023

So many SEOs stress the impact of citations and signals – *how much impact do these have on map rankings?*

It can be difficult to pinpoint their impact in real-world campaigns because there are so many factors to consider. However, we're doing our best to create as close to a single-variable test as we can get. This test will be run on an entirely new brand. No links built to the website or listing, very little on-page, minimal optimization of the listing, and no visibility.

| Backlink profile					Organic search		Paid search	
DR [i]	UR [i]	Backlinks [i]	Ref. domains [i]		Keywords [i]	Traffic [i]	Keywords [i]	Traffic [i]
0	0	0	0		1 +1	0	0	0
AR N/A		All time 0	All time 0		Top 3 0	Value $0	Ads 0	Cost N/A

When doing a brand search, the website is indexed, but that's it. Not a single brand mention. This gives us a clean slate for our test, and supporting our goal for a more single-variable testing scenario.

Local visibility is pretty much non-existent before building the signals. The grids were the same for the 4 main keywords we are tracking – insulation company, insulation installation, insulation contractor, and insulation services.

Red, red, and more red…
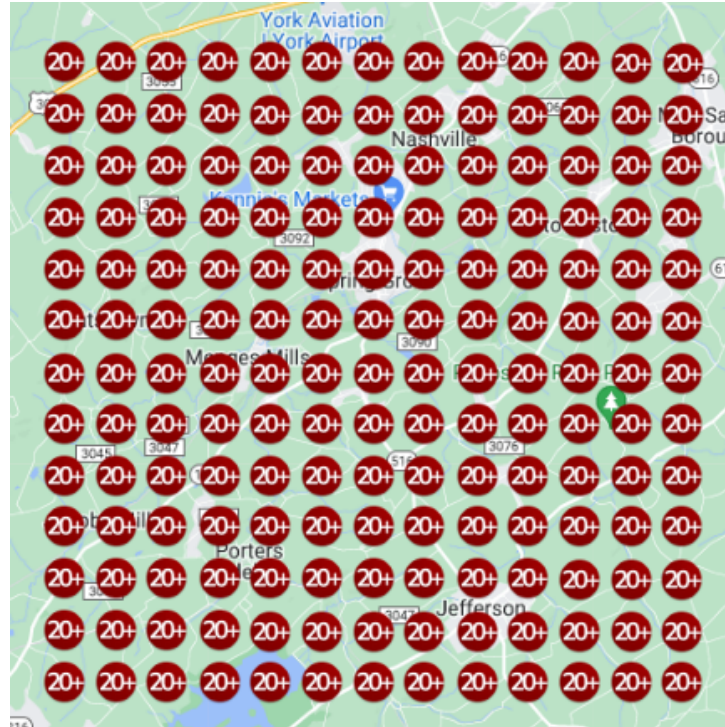
To conduct initial competitor research and build the links, we used **level 2 Custom Signals**. Then, we used ChatGPT to craft a keyword-optimized company description for the citations.

We've always believed that citations and signals are some of the biggest bang for your buck in local, but now it's time to put that theory to the test.

We're hopeful this brand-new listing and website will provide more definitive data that isn't muddied by previous SEO work.

Test Update: November 3, 2023

After building 21 signals in the 1st month of the campaign, 19 of them are live and 2 are pending approval. Signals were finished on 10/25, so it's been about a week since the signals were created. And that's ALL we did.

Most grids saw NO movement. However, "insulation services" did see a small movement. Below you can see a few more nodes move, with the highest being position 11…
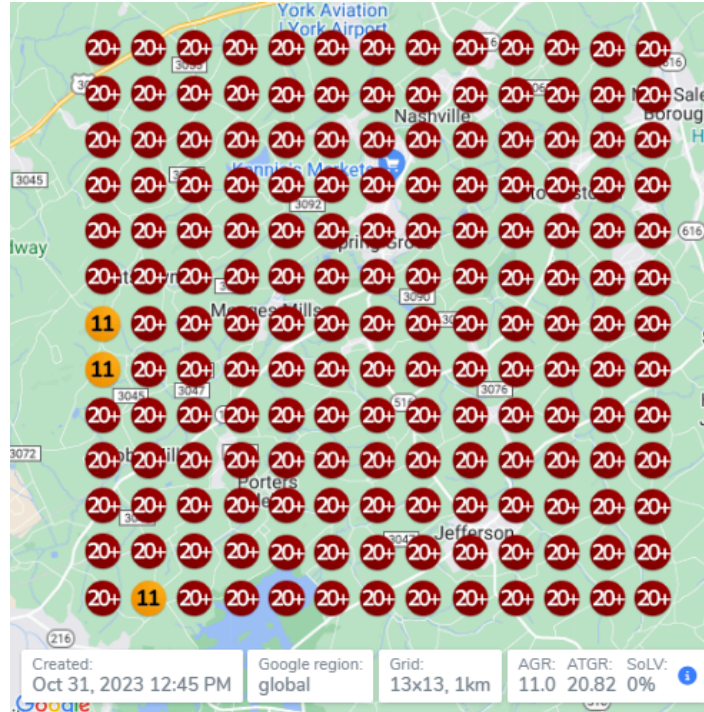
While this wasn't a significant movement, it does demonstrate the impact of signals.

Test Update: November 17, 2023

The 2.5km grids aren't seeing much movement. While we saw one additional node jump from 20+ to 11 in the "insulation services" grid, this doesn't constitute a measurable improvement.

We didn't expect much movement from just a handful of citations. Even though 21 links/brand mentions sounds like a lot, it's nowhere near enough to build a trusted brand.

On Tuesday 11/14 we completely optimized the GBP listing to give it a little extra nudge. Before this, the listing hadn't been touched.

Test Update: December 8, 2023

Since our last update, our team built 6+ months of signals to expedite our test (and the results). We let those signals sit for about a week, then began investigating the impact.

All grids we pulled were from this Tuesday 12/5 - less than 6 weeks after beginning the VERY FIRST optimizations, we began to see results….

First, we saw "insulation contractors" starting to rank in the outskirts of the grid.
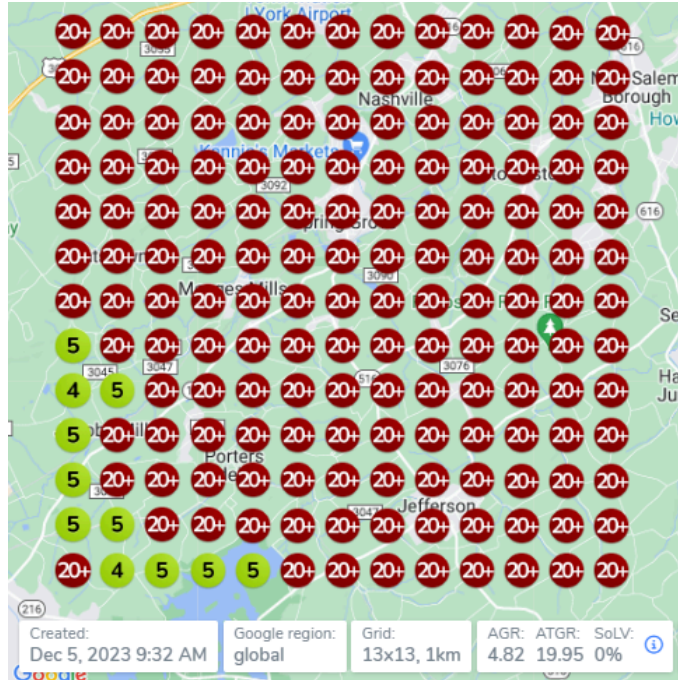
We expected ranking to be easier here due to less competition…

But the nodes jumped from 20+ to 4-5, which is a bigger jump than we expected to see. However, there weren't as many nodes with movement as we initially expected.

We also saw movement with "insulation installation" in a similar area…

We also saw "insulation contractors" started to pop up in some nodes…
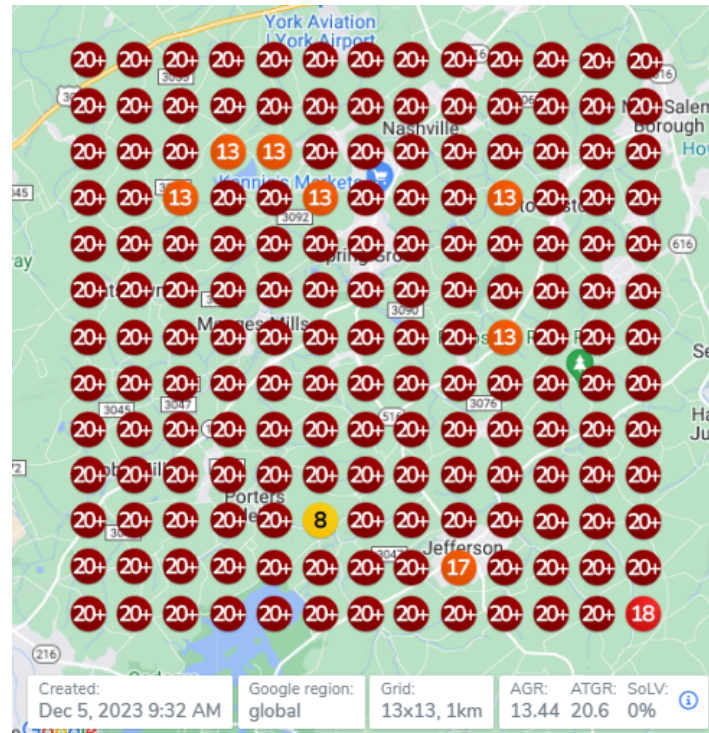
So just to recap what's been done so far:

1. Built 6+ months of Custom Signals in 2 months
2. Optimized the Google listing

While this work may be enough to move an aged listing with already-built links, it wasn't enough to push rankings on its own.

This was expected though. Citations alone aren't enough to rank a listing. Custom Signals must be implemented as part of a holistic SEO campaign.

How Can We Use Google Notes in SEO Strategies?

Test Setup & Update: December 1, 2023

Google recently released a Notes feature, allowing users to add notes directly in the SERPs. As soon as we saw it live in the SERPs, we had to test it.

The integration of indexed notes in SERPs introduces a new layer of relevance, user engagement, and potential link-building opportunities in search results.

Here is how notes appear in the SERPs:
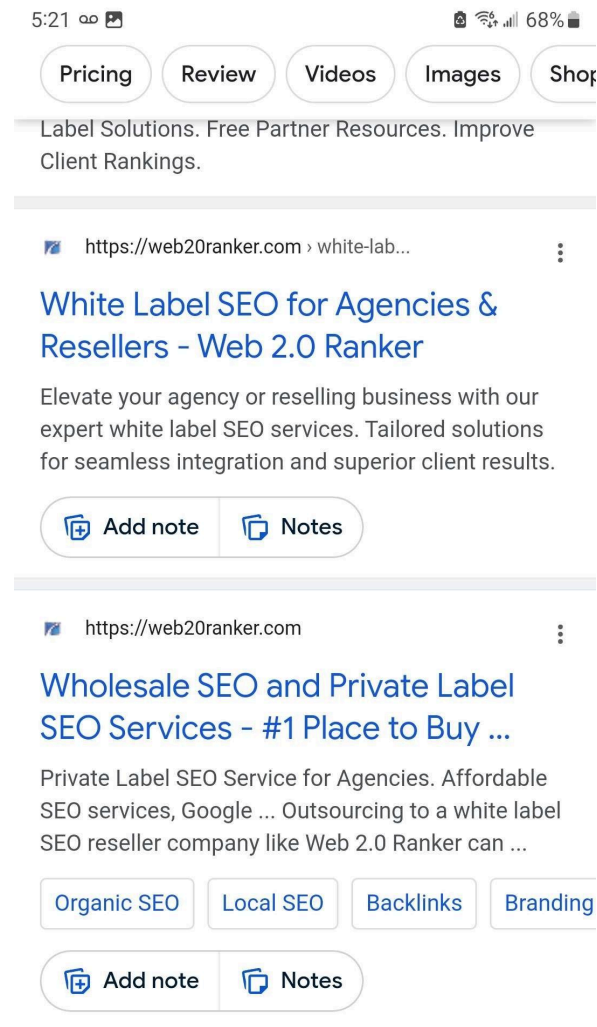
YMYL results don't appear to have the notes feature, but we expected that.

We tested notes on multiple different SERPs and industries. Below is what we had noted so far…

1. Multiple URLs are created
2. Notes must be approved
3. Google doesn't like it if you try and put links in posts
4. You can like and share notes

Here's an example of a SERP note we created:
https://www.google.com/viewer/content/u2vz3evm/qgXdMf?hl=en

Once a note is created, there are 2 URLs created for each note…

One URL is indexed, and one looks like it's not (as of now). User profiles are also indexed, which is where all notes are accumulated.

You can also add links to profiles for social accounts like YouTube, Facebook, and X
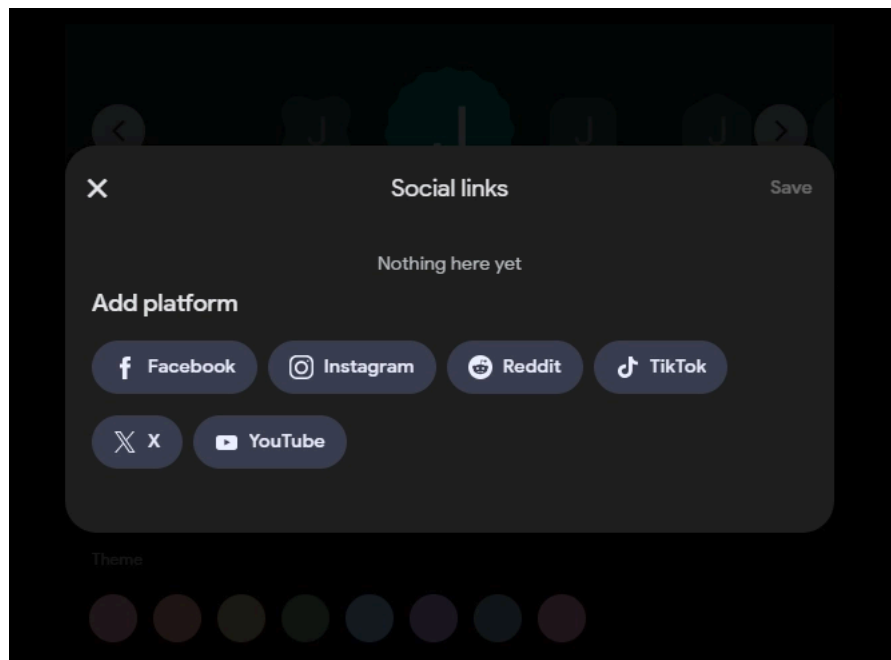
Long story short, this is one of the biggest SERP features we've seen released in a while.

We don't know the full impact or usability of notes yet, but the feature seems promising. We will keep you updated as we continue to test.

Test Update: December 15, 2023

At the time of this update we were still seeing the feature only rolled out to our more aged Google accounts. Newer accounts were still not seeing the feature available for use.

After reviewing the notes we'd posted in the SERPs from our previous update, we noticed issues arising…

Many of the notes we'd originally posted were removed from the SERPs completely. There were a variety of notes removed, but below we cover some of the trends we saw.

Personal Information

- Addresses
- phone numbers (possibly all numbers like 24/7 and times)
- names (even the businesses possibly)

Personal Information URLs

When we originally added URLs to the notes, we were unsure if Google would even let us post them. But the notes with links were published…

Then taken down.

We had an inkling that the party wasn't going to last long. There are too many ways for SEOs to take advantage.

Repetitive Note Posting

This one we could've guessed…

Mike loves to push tools to their breaking point (& beyond). But if you're planning to use notes in any facets of your campaigns, be sure to post thoughtful notes.

■ ■ ■

That's it for our 2023 testing, but we will be back to share more of our findings with you next quarter! If you want to follow along with the tests in this report, be sure to **sign up for SEO Mad Scientist updates** in our Weekend Emails.

Have new test ideas or insight into current testing? Be sure to drop them in the **Local Client Takeover FB Group**! We are always looking for new aspects to test and love discussing different perspectives on SEO. You can also just join the group to ask SEO questions and make connections.

Until next time, happy testing!