link building

competitor analysis

title tags

<H1>
</H1>

traffic monitoring

SEO

NEWSLETTER
October 2013
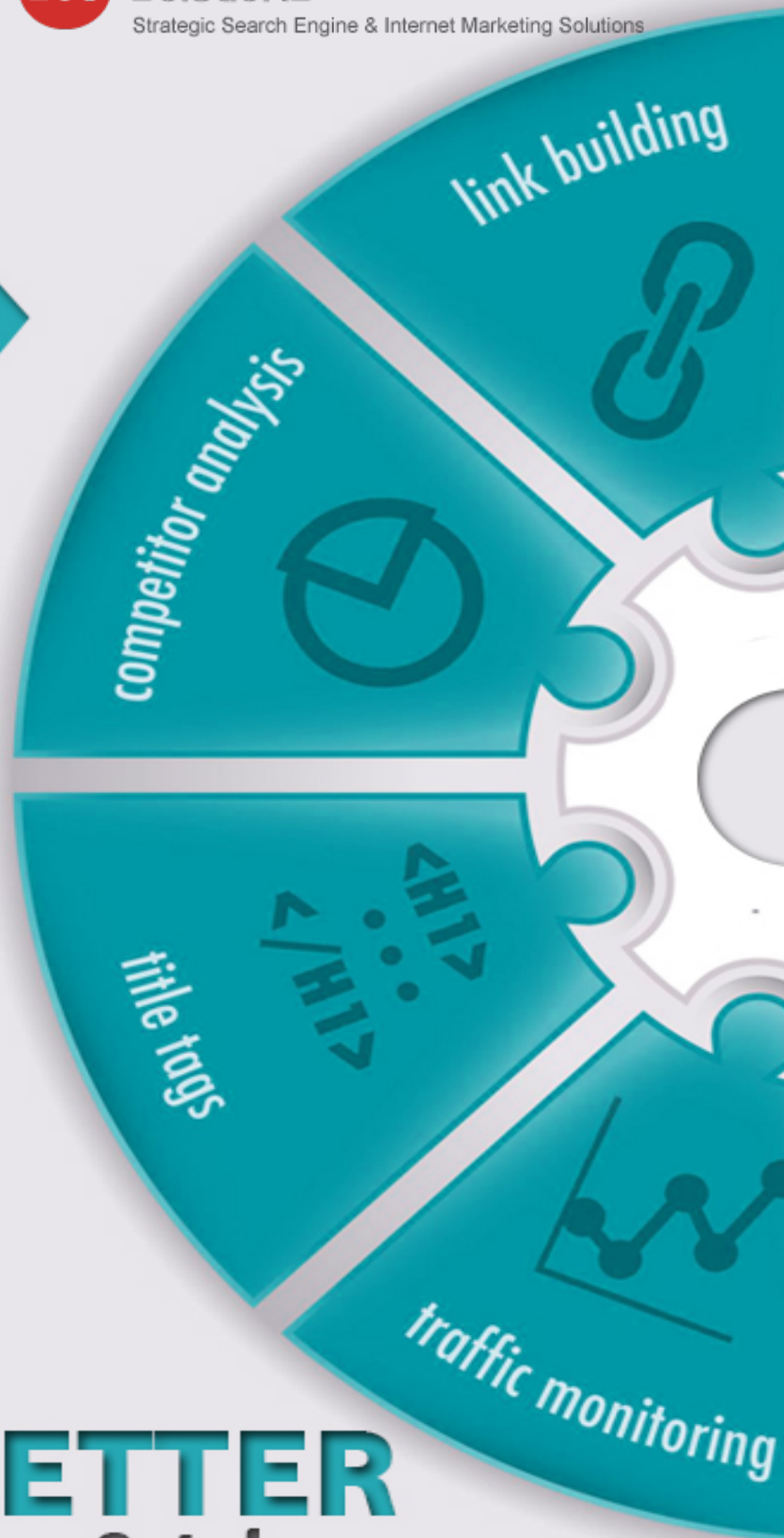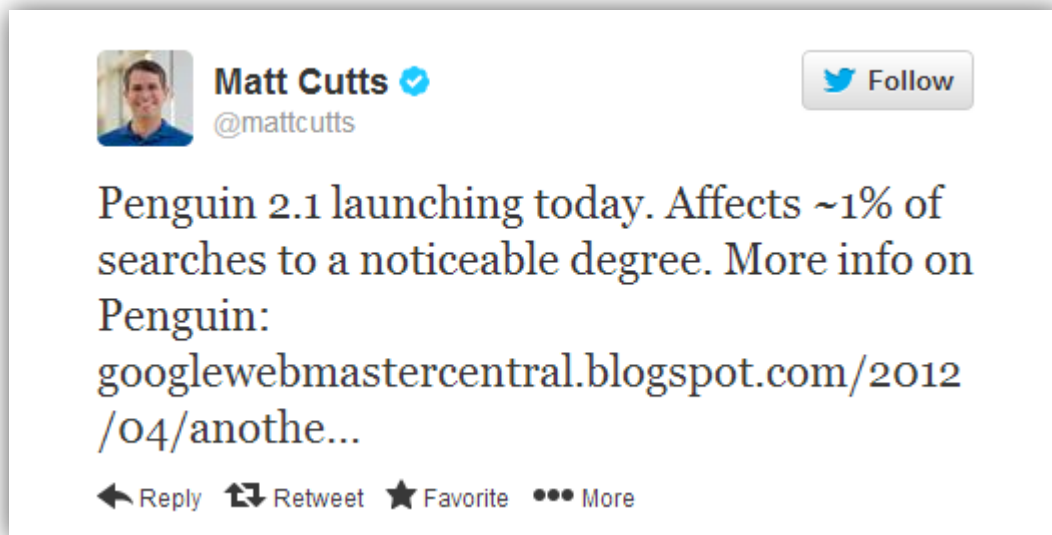
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1 PENGUIN 2.1 ANALYSIS – WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Just a week after Google launched the Hummingbird update, Matt Cutts surprised the SEO community with the news of another Penguin update – This time Penguin 2.1. Below is what he tweeted:

Matt Cutts @
@mattcutts

Follow

Penguin 2.1 launching today. Affects ~1% of searches to a noticeable degree. More info on Penguin: googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2012 /04/anothe...

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According to Cutts, this update affected ~1% of searches. However, as per our in-depth research and comments across the webmaster and SEO community, it seems like more than 1% of websites were impacted by this update.

We did a deep analysis of the results appearing on page 1 after this update. Below are our observations after doing an analysis of 3000+ websites:

1. <u>Data Aggregators are really dominating the ranks</u> for the spots we checked that went backwards. We even verified this with other heads of global SEO companies and even they are confirming the same. Below are a few examples that you can look at:

   - For these 3 Keywords - "Septic Tank Cleaning Seguin", "Plumber Timonium" and "Drain Cleaning Seguin" - 100% listings are dominated by Data aggregators & national sites at the local level.
   - "Plumbing Contractor Perry Hall" - All 17 listings dominated by Data aggregators & national sites except 2 sites - one on map and another in normal listing. Even the maps have 6 listings of plus.google.com

- "Landscape Design Florham Park NJ" and "Landscape Designer Mountain Lakes NJ" - http://bednarlandscape.123productpages.com/ is ranking instead of the main site - http://bednarlandscape.com. Google is ranking the test website instead of the main website. This might be due to a 38 DA score of the root domain vs. 30 DA of bednarlandscape.com
- Moving Companies Camden County - 100% listings dominated by Data Aggregators & National sites with all inner URL's ranking.

2. Below is the list of domains that are ruling the top 10 results (across all verticals targeting GEOs) as compared to last week.

Sites like YouTube, Yelp,YellowPages, WhitePages have increased their presence even more. However we did notice a drop for Google Images / News and Maps results.

Top 20 Domains	Total %	Increase in %
youtube.com	4.32%	0.23%
yelp.com	4.40%	0.12%
yellowpages.com	5.89%	0.05%
yellowpages.aol.com	0.91%	-0.02%
yellowbook.com	0.97%	0.00%
whitepages.com	0.70%	0.70%
thumbtack.com	0.87%	0.05%
superpages.com	2.16%	0.05%
plus.google.com	3.72%	0.05%
local.yahoo.com	1.86%	-0.02%
lawyers.findlaw.com	1.09%	0.03%
lawyers.com	0.96%	0.06%
indeed.com	1.13%	-0.03%
homeadvisor.com	1.70%	0.13%
facebook.com	1.89%	-0.04%
en.wikipedia.org	1.25%	0.05%
bbb.org	2.12%	0.11%
avvo.com	0.79%	0.79%
angieslist.com	2.95%	0.08%
amazon.com	0.76%	0.00%

3. As can be seen above, more than 40% of the first page real estate is now captured by Data Aggregators + Local Directories + Industry Specific Directories.

Below is the preliminary plan of action we will be adopting to recover affected sites plus future proof our SEO work.

1. We need to keep reducing link velocity which you have heard us reference in the past. Getting too many links quickly will be flagged easily by Google. However, with the need to show quick rankings, which is the top request we all get from clients, you can see how it's a tricky situation for us

2. We need to continue to focus on more On-Site optimization which includes correcting all possible 404 errors, fix duplicate (thin) content on the site, implementing Google Authorship, etc. Clients need to be willing to either fix or allow us to fix these issues. Internal blogs is also a good addition which we should do when allowed.

3. Vary anchor text and lower the % of specific key terms focus. We have been doing this since the last Penguin update and will continue to work the %'s. As of now, we will be getting 90% of the links for branded terms and the remaining 10% will be a combination of exact match + long tail keywords.

4. We will be balancing followed links to nofollow ones to have a natural link profile. Apart from this, removal of links with problematic history becomes even more important.

5. Social Signals - Another thing which we have identified is a lack of social signals. So, in order to get social signals instead of doing social bookmarking of the articles submitted we will be getting social signals to those articles which will include Facebook likes, Tweets & Google+ Votes. Client participation is encouraged.

6. This has been mentioned numerous times but getting your Google+ local listing verified is of utmost importance.

We have updated our SEO Deliverables to match the Penguin update. Since a varied link profile is the safest bet, we have added activities like infographics creation and distribution, coupon distribution, social networking links, presentation creation and distribution and even premium press release distribution to diversify our backlink profile. Please ask for a copy of new SEO deliverables @ same price.

As always, we will be continuously tracking & observing the effects of these changes to our strategy as well as upcoming algorithmic changes by Google so that we can stay updated with the latest SEO strategies.

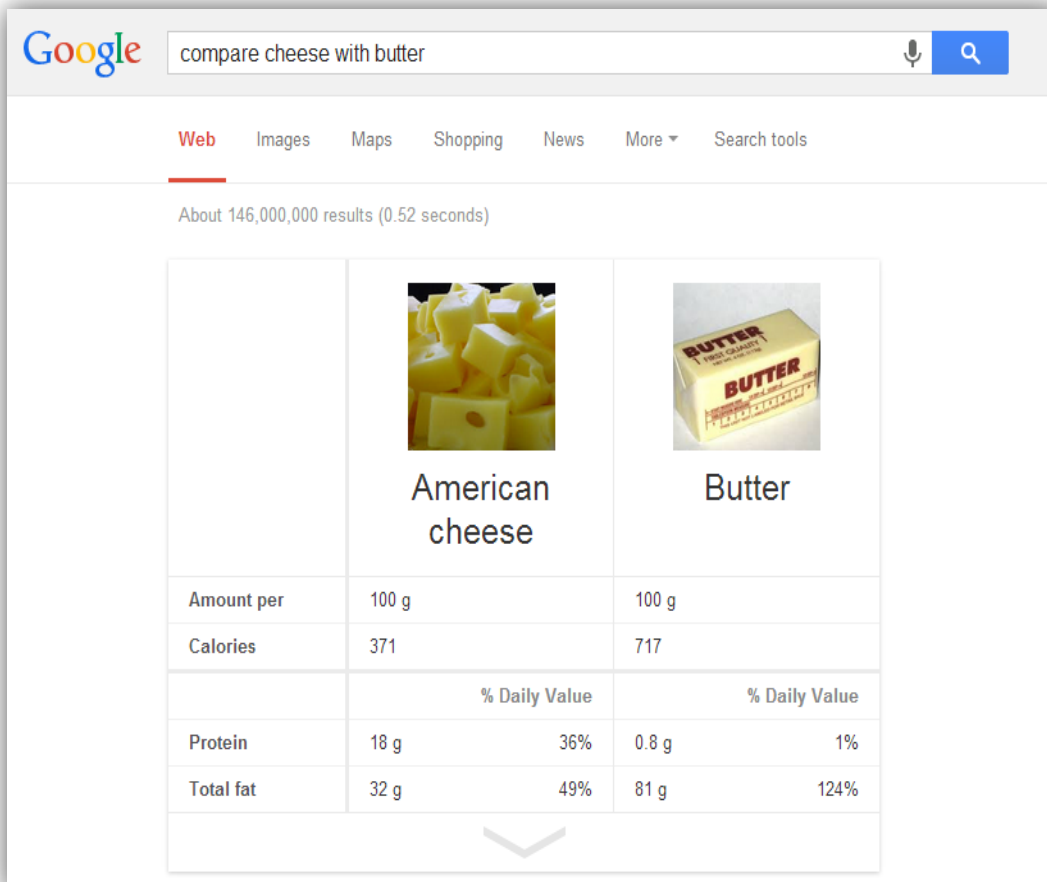## 2 WHAT IS THE GOOGLE HUMMINGBIRD UPDATE AND HOW CAN WE ADAPT

Google celebrated its 15th Birthday by announcing changes to their search algorithm and search experience. They held a Press Conference on September 26, 2013, where they discussed the launch of a new search algorithm, code named "Hummingbird". The launch of this new algorithm shocked even more, as this algorithm has already been live on Google.com for at least a month now.

What do we know about the Hummingbird Update?

According to Google, this search algorithm is much smarter. It can answer questions, filter the answers, and give you comparison data, at a glimpse. You don't have to click away from search results; hoping Google SERPs will have answers ready for you.

They've also sharpened their mobile search results page. It's cleaner and simpler, optimized for touch, with results clustered on cards so you can focus on the answers you're looking for.

A typical example is a Google search for "compare cheese with butter" which displays the below knowledge graph.

The dropdown below reveals more information which is collected from various sources around the web.

By doing this, we can say that Google is keen on keeping users on their search results pages for a longer time. This in turn, increases exposure to sponsored ads, which, in turn improves their ad sales and revenue.

Apart from this, we also came to know that Hummingbird affected 90% of searches worldwide. But, as far as our research is concerned, we didn't see a major shift in the rankings that we monitor. This update did not affect us or our client's websites. Nor it was perceived by the webmaster community. The reason could be that this wasn't an algorithmic update impacting general search quality, but instead, focuses on data retrieval, artificial intelligence, and how data is accessed and presented to users. This update seems to be more linked towards:

- Google Knowledge Graph
- Google Now
- Google Voice Search

How does this change impact search results?

Obviously this algorithm is more of an internal engine change, not an external framework change as we saw with Penguin or Panda. The vehicle looks the same, but it is now much smarter and more powerful displaying informational results directly in the SERPs.

How we can adapt to this change?

According to Google, there's nothing new or different business owners need to worry about. Guidance remains the same, it says: have original, high-quality content. Signals that have been important in the past remain important; Hummingbird just allows Google to process them in new and hopefully better ways.

Below are few important points you should consider:

1. Start adding more real-world, question specific information into your site content (long questions).

2. Get direct feedback from site visitors on real-world natural language queries they are using to navigate to your site. This will allow you to better optimize your site to handle people navigating with voice search within the growing mobile market.

3. Get serious about <u>Mobile</u>. Most of this traffic will be mobile-related and with mobile visitors quickly out numbering desktop visitors - there is NO time to lose.

4. Consider adding more relevant, informative video content to your pages as a way to increase your site traffic and insulate against the effects of Hummingbird.
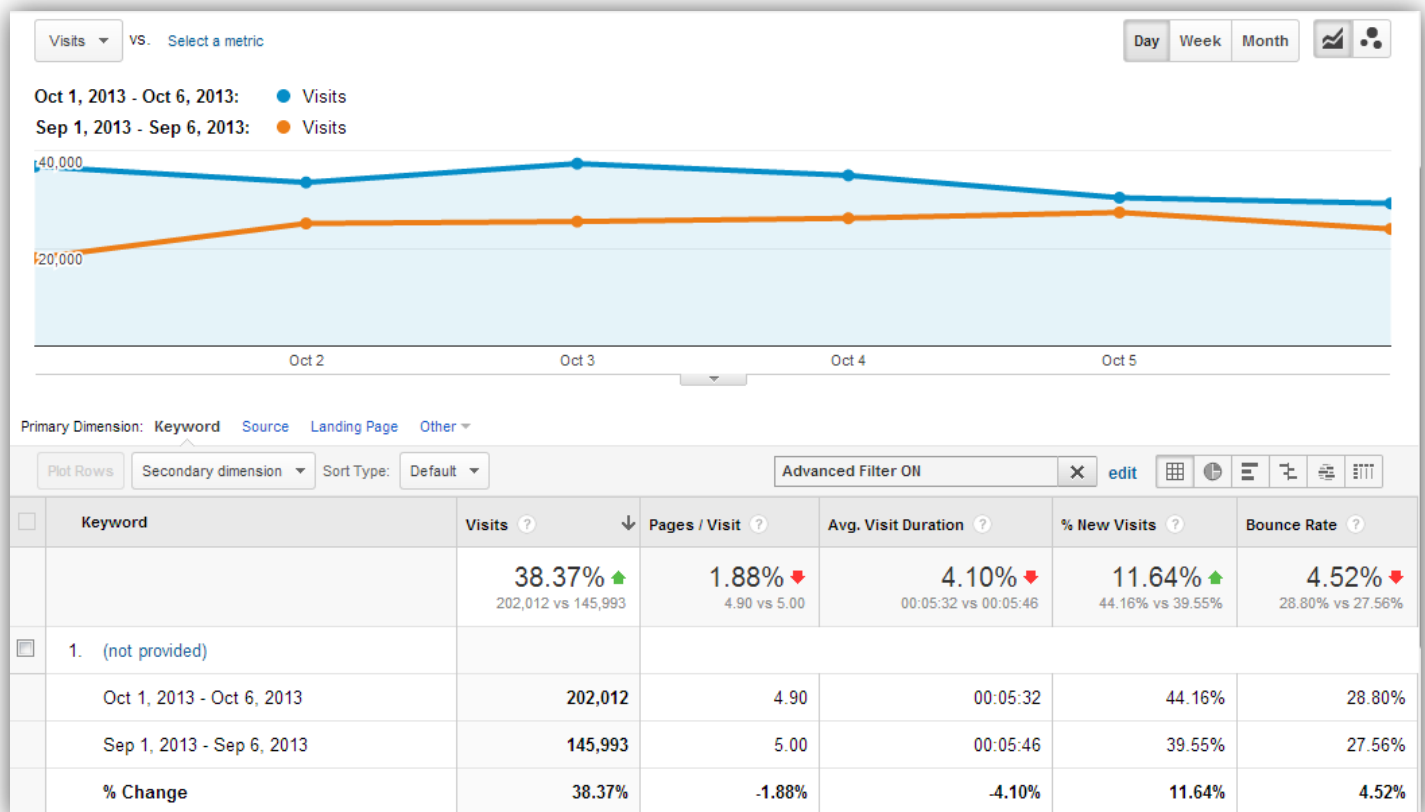
Just under two years ago, Google began encrypting the Organic Searches for users that were logged into their Google profiles resulting in slow death of the organic search traffic referrer data. However, last week Google made an official announcement that it will be encrypting ALL searches whether users are logged in or not.

For those who are unaware, traffic from an encrypted search shows up in your Google Analytics stats as (not provided). Now with all searches now becoming encrypted, the complete picture for free keyword data from Google is gone.

We compared the data for one of our sites and the result was roughly 38% increase in (not provided) data. Take a look below:

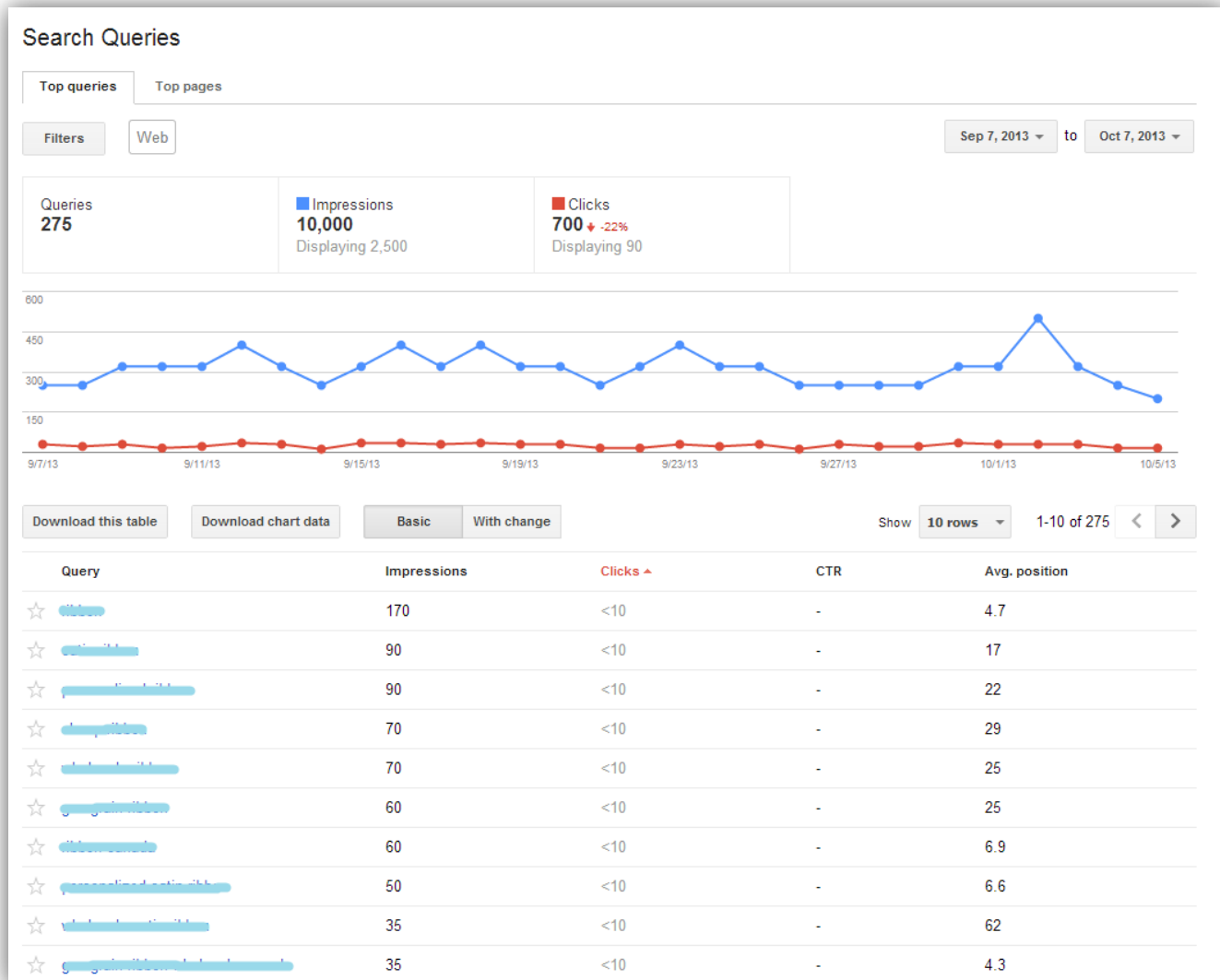| Keyword	Visits ↓	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
	38.37% ▲ 202,012 vs 145,993	1.88% ▼ 4.90 vs 5.00	4.10% ▼ 00:05:32 vs 00:05:46	11.64% ▲ 44.16% vs 39.55%	4.52% ▼ 28.80% vs 27.56%
1. (not provided)					
Oct 1, 2013 - Oct 6, 2013	202,012	4.90	00:05:32	44.16%	28.80%
Sep 1, 2013 - Sep 6, 2013	145,993	5.00	00:05:46	39.55%	27.56%
% Change	38.37%	-1.88%	-4.10%	11.64%	4.52%

Google has stated that they're protecting their user's privacy. However, this is NOT applicable for Google Adwords. Paid campaigns will continue to get keyword data as usual. So, by doing this Google is still invading their user's policy.

There are some workarounds you can use in order to capture that traffic. Here are some valuable ways we need to look at replacing the data now that Google isn't providing it.

Look at Non-Google Keywords – Check Referral Data from Bing. While Bing doesn't send a significant portion of traffic for a site will looking at overall search, you still can get an idea of what keywords are bringing traffic. We advise you to try this particularly for sites that have significant amount traffic. For smaller sites, this isn't ideal.

	Keyword	Source	Visits ↓	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
			3,682 % of Total: 2.91% (126,732)	11.80 Site Avg: 8.79 (34.30%)	00:07:52 Site Avg: 00:05:46 (36.30%)	49.62% Site Avg: 51.74% (-4.10%)	23.90% Site Avg: 32.75% (-27.02%)
	1. ————	bing	412	16.23	00:10:30	31.55%	12.62%
	2. ————	yahoo	254	13.43	00:07:54	35.04%	22.44%
	3. ————	bing	217	16.64	00:11:21	33.64%	13.82%
	4. ————	yahoo	150	14.42	00:07:49	24.67%	22.67%
	5. ————	yahoo	134	11.43	00:07:23	29.85%	21.64%
	6. ————	bing	86	17.43	00:12:04	48.84%	16.28%
	7. ————	yahoo	72	17.75	00:13:34	40.28%	8.33%
	8. ————	bing	53	12.21	00:08:53	32.08%	11.32%
	9. ————	yahoo	47	13.87	00:09:26	34.04%	14.89%
	10. ————	bing	41	15.90	00:12:07	48.78%	26.83%

- **Use Google Webmaster Tools** – Users can also still see stats within Google Webmaster Tools from the "Search Queries" section. Unfortunately, they can only view the top 2000 searches for any one day, within the last 90 days, making long-term traffic comparison difficult. Google has stated they intend to increase that 90 day window to one year, and we hope that happens sooner rather than later.

Search Queries

Top queries | Top pages

Filters | Web

Sep 7, 2013 ▾ to Oct 7, 2013 ▾

Queries	■ Impressions	■ Clicks
275	10,000	700 ▼ -22%
	Displaying 2,500	Displaying 90

Download this table | Download chart data | Basic | With change

Show 10 rows ▾ 1-10 of 275 ‹ ›

Query	Impressions	Clicks ▲	CTR	Avg. position
☆	170	<10	-	4.7
☆	90	<10	-	17
☆	90	<10	-	22
☆	70	<10	-	29
☆	70	<10	-	25
☆	60	<10	-	25
☆	60	<10	-	6.9
☆	50	<10	-	6.6
☆	35	<10	-	62
☆	35	<10	-	4.3

- **Analyze On-Site Searches** – You should capture all the on-site searches that visitors are doing on your site, so you can also get a better idea of exactly the keywords they are looking for. For this you need to set up Internal Site Search Analytics. Check out this **blog** for more information.

- **Use Google AdWords Data** – If you are running an Adwords campaign, it's always a good idea to see which keywords are doing well and use them in your organic campaign. Since Google displays all data for paid searches, the job becomes relatively easier to sort out the best performing keywords.

- **Use Filters to Segment '(Not Provided)' Data** – You can set up filters for all your "(not provided)" traffic so that it shows you the landing page for each of those "(not provided)" referrals. So even though you might not know the exact keyword that's bringing in the traffic, you can instead filter it so that you have a bit better idea of what the user was searching for when they landed on the page.

	Keyword	Landing Page	Visits ⬇	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
			8,495 % of Total: 6.70% (126,732)	12.43 Site Avg: 8.79 (41.45%)	00:08:10 Site Avg: 00:05:46 (41.57%)	45.09% Site Avg: 51.74% (-12.86%)	23.34% Site Avg: 32.75% (-28.72%)
☐	1. (not provided)	/default.aspx	**4,339**	14.79	00:09:29	52.25%	10.37%
☐	2. (not provided)	/islamic-clothing/abaya-and-jilbab/default.aspx	**1,416**	12.31	00:07:58	51.84%	26.41%
☐	3. (not provided)	/islamic-clothing/default.aspx	**293**	9.71	00:04:44	64.16%	20.82%
☐	4. (not provided)	/s.nl/sc.3/.f	**119**	7.50	00:06:28	0.84%	52.94%
☐	5. (not provided)	/islamic-clothing/hijab/default.aspx	**88**	7.49	00:05:52	55.68%	34.09%
☐	6. (not provided)	/islamic-clothing/kurti/default.aspx	**74**	7.64	00:05:52	21.62%	44.59%
☐	7. (not provided)	/Abayas.html	**53**	13.79	00:10:40	47.17%	22.64%
☐	8. (not provided)	/site/html/sizechart-master.html	**45**	5.18	00:03:38	84.44%	60.00%
☐	9. (not provided)	/islamic-clothing/abaya-and-jilbab/Pleated-Plain-Basic-Abaya_7.html	**43**	7.84	00:06:03	11.63%	48.84%
☐	10. (not provided)	/site/html/sizechart-women.html	**42**	12.10	00:10:23	16.67%	38.10%

Google AdWords announced Target Return on Ad Spend (ROAS), a new bid strategy, as a part of broader initiative to provide greater flexibility and control over performance targets and better overall return from your Ad spend.

Target ROAS helps you maximize revenue by automatically adjusting your keyword, ad group, and campaign-level bids to meet a custom target return on ad spend. Your target ROAS represents how much revenue you want to earn for each dollar you spend on AdWords. For example, if your goal is to earn $7 for each $1 you spend on AdWords, your target ROAS would be 700%.

Harnessing the same real-time bidding technology behind Target CPA and Enhanced CPC, target ROAS takes into account signals such as location, browser, time of day, operating system and more to adjust your bids based on your ad's predicted performance.

Grow sales and hit your ROAS goals with ease

Here's an example to demonstrate the power of target ROAS -

Let's say you're an advertiser whose conversion values vary from product to product. Ideally, you would love to bid higher on keywords that lead to larger orders, and lower for keywords that lead to smaller ones, however, this would be time consuming and complex to do manually.

You can use Target ROAS to help you dynamically select the right bid for each auction. Here's what you can do:

1. Set up conversion values in Conversion Tracking so that AdWords understands the value of orders placed on your site.
2. Choose the ROAS percentage that matches your business goals.
3. Create a new "Target ROAS" bid strategy in the Shared Library. (see image below)
4. Enter your target ROAS into your newly created flexible bid strategy.

Apply the new bid strategy to keywords, ad groups or campaigns.

5 PINTEREST ROLLS OUT PROMOTED PINS

Pinterest, which is a virtual vision board for many, plans to roll out a feature, just like Facebook & Twitter. "Promoted Pins", that will appear at the top of search results & category feeds. Businesses will now promote their pins to be included in your vision board.
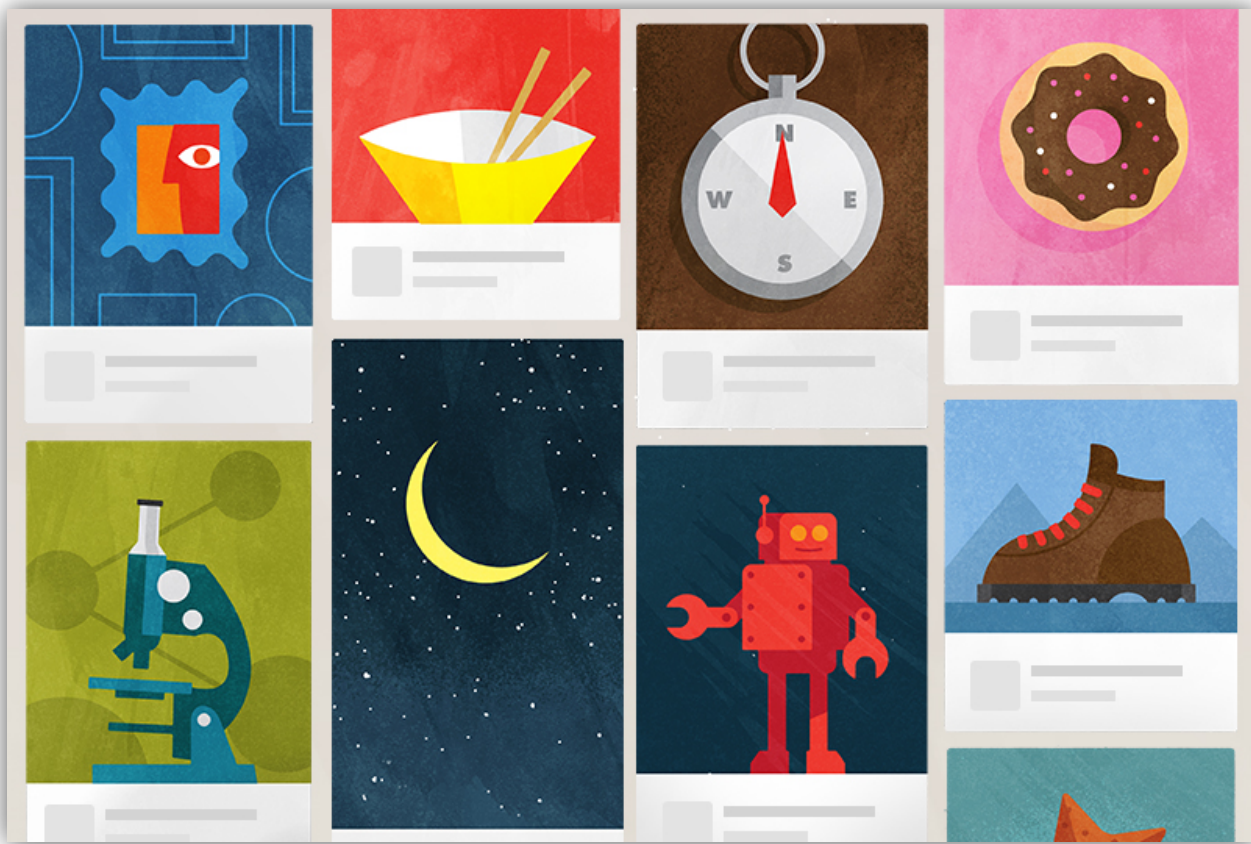
These aren't those flashy banners or pop-up ads, instead Pinterest plans to be:

- **Transparent:** It will ascertain as to which pins are sponsored or organic.

- **Relevant:** Ads will be interest specific. For example, a designer dress of your style.

- **Enhance the Ads according to feedback:** Ads will be modified to their best according to the feedback received.

Pinterest will be testing this new feature with a few selected businesses for now. Later on, it will be rolled out for all the brands. With this in place, it also wants to make sure that users are not lured away with the entry of "Paid Pins". Companies dealing with food, beverage, fashion can leverage on this feature by promoting their pins during important events.

Pinterest will actually make users pin those items which are on their recent "Shopping List', thus increasing the brand recall while scanning the list.

Statistics show that Pinterest has higher conversion rate than Facebook or Twitter. So with this in mind, Pinterest ads should definitely prove to be a great way for ROI. Pinterest Ads will surely be an "In" thing for future marketing plans.