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REAL EXAMPLES
HOW LINK ANALYSIS AND AUDITING CAN
IMPROVE SEARCH VISIBILITY



INTRODUCTION

Back in autumn 2016, Google issued its final Penguin update before Penguin became incorporated into its core search algorithm.

What did this mean?

Penguin-related penalties can now be applied – or lifted – in real time, whenever Google crawls and indexes a site.

This, of course, was bad news for sites with unethical backlink profiles, but great news for those who had addressed issues with their backlink profile after a ranking drop, but previously had to wait months for the next ‘Penguin update’ before being restored to the search results.

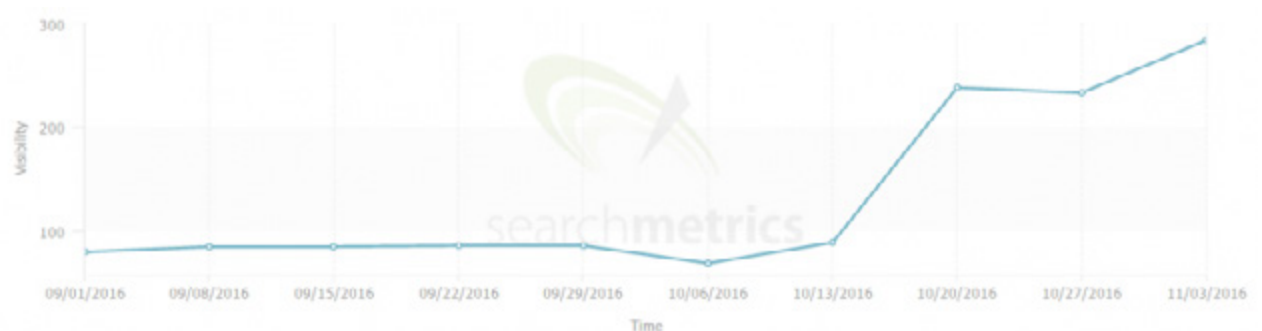
Now the impact of any hard work put into cleaning up a link profile could lead to visibility improvements much more quickly – and this is what we saw for clients when examining their monthly organic search performance a month after the update was rolled out.

So how did the last Penguin update affect our clients?

When an algorithm update drops, we always expect to see some kind of shift in performance, but nobody, no matter how much of an expert they profess to be, can say for certain how significant that is going to be, how positive it could be or how negative it could be. As soon as Google post their update there is no shortage of digital gurus and search marketing ninjas throwing out hyperbole, but ultimately, you never know what is going to happen.

In reality though, a number of our clients saw a strong and positive uplift in performance as outlined in the graphs below.

Client example 1



This client operated in the hugely competitive automotive sector, and they had spent more or less all of the last four years with low traffic and poor keyword rankings on pages in the search engine results pages (SERPs) that nobody even realise exist. Via a complete link audit, clean up and a link acquisition campaign this client was in a great position to take advantage of Penguin, and it happened at a great time for them.

Not only did their search visibility almost triple, they saw a fantastic improvement on some of their most valuable keywords, traffic and sessions were up over 30% month on month and 54% year on year.

Client example 2



The second client sits in the ultra-competitive fashion market. Considering their position within that marketplace their performance has been relatively good over the previous year; however some historic link issues had held it back. With the update of Penguin they also saw a strong increase in organic visibility as well as month on month traffic growth in excess of 25%.

Client example 3



The third example above shows the improvements in search visibility that a client in another highly competitive vertical saw since the final release of Penguin.

This client had attempted to clean up their link profile numerous times over the last few years to no avail; when we came on board, we found further links that needed to be removed. We began this strategy straight away and had some great results. Almost immediately after the release of Penguin all their key metrics started to improve, rankings, sessions and leads were all at a much higher level.

So many clients saw improvements in their visibility scores, which is testament to the painstaking and detailed work that had gone into link audits and removal projects over the preceding years.

CLIENT EXAMPLE 1 - HOW AND WHY THEY SAW INCREASE IN VISIBILITY

This client engaged with us in April 2016 after working with a string of agencies to no avail; they understood that their site had been impacted by an earlier variant of Penguin, but nothing had been done to try and put the situation right. At this point in time their Searchmetrics visibility chart was as below; understandably they were not very happy and performance was non-existent.

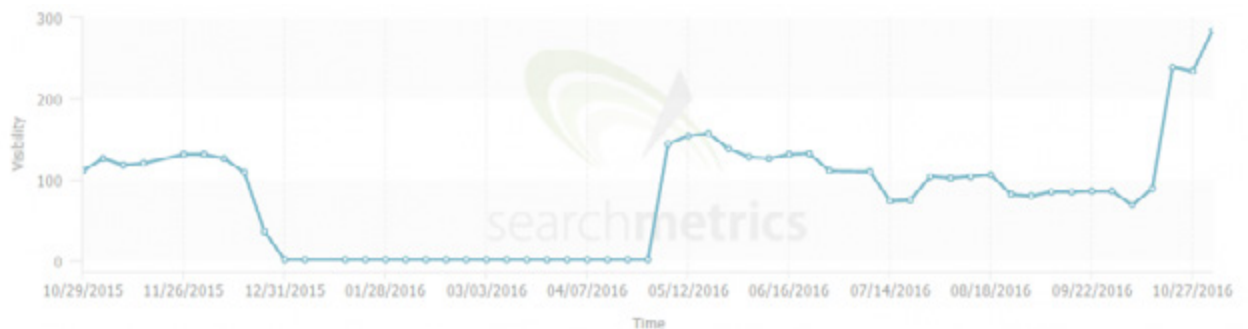


As part of our organic search strategy we decided that we would carry out a full technical audit of their website and began the project by focusing on their backlink profile. We firstly sought to classify their link profile into the following four areas:

Link Type	Number of Links	Suggested Action
TOX 3 Links	618 (67% of total)	Links that should be immediately removed as links under the TOX 3 rule resemble a link farm/web directory.
High Priority Links	618 (67%)	Links considered dangerous to the health of your backlink profile. In most cases we would recommend all high priority links be removed.
Medium Priority Links	128 (13%)	Links considered risky to the health of your backlink profile. All medium priority links should be reviewed to determine if they are harmful or safe.
Low Priority Links	182 (20%)	Links considered healthy. All low priority links should be reviewed to determine if they are harmful or safe.

We then proceeded to manually audit each individual link to ascertain whether it added value, was relevant, and was considered to be in line with Google's guidelines. The results of this audit highlighted in excess of 800 links that we deemed to be causing the site to fall under a Penguin based penalty and we therefore progressed to remove the offending links.

This was carried out in late April 2016, and the corresponding Searchmetrics graph shows the visibility beginning to improve at this stage.



Unfortunately the removal of so many links left the sites link profile highly depleted; we sought to rectify this by implementing a highly targeted and relevant link acquisition campaign. This was initiated by reaching out to industry related bloggers and influencers to identify what kind of content they would be interested in sharing across their channels. We collated this information and our in-house design and campaigns teams collaborated to create an infographic using comments directly from the bloggers which was then shared out across their blogs and social media channels.

The results of this campaign were overwhelming; in one quarter we naturally acquired in excess of 30 links that brought authority into the client's site from relevant and authoritative blogs. We also saw an incredibly positive social campaign which further amplified the fantastic content that had been produced. In the months following the completion of this campaign we saw the clients rankings for some of their most valuable keywords rise from the relative abyss of page 5 up to positions 2,4,5 and 6 and they have seen significant month on month and year on year organic traffic increases of over 30% and 50% respectively.

HOW DO I KEEP AN EYE ON MY RANKINGS?

- **Set your rank tracking to daily updates using a tool such as Ahrefs or Moz).**
- **Check you organic sessions daily.**
- **Check visibility on Searchmetrics every Thursday (it updates weekly).**
- **Changes will only be applied when Google recrawls and reindexes so some sites may have to wait to see the full effect.**

GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

ABOUT US

Located in North West England, Click Consult is a multi award-winning search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC), with over 70 professionals employed and with a portfolio of over 60 clients from across the UK, Europe, Americas and Australia.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year 2018, adding to its long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within both RAR's and Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Blog

Click Consult regularly posts actionable insights on its blog – dealing with all aspects of search marketing. From technical SEO to PPC, content marketing and Analytics advice, the Click Consult blog has something for everyone of any ability.

eBooks

Click Consult produces in depth eBooks on aspects of search marketing on a regular basis, dealing with the latest best practices, changes to standard practices, methods of improvement and more.

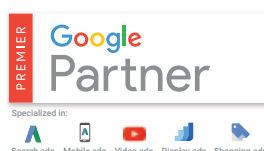
Infographics

Sometimes what you need is a quick point of reference about complex subjects. Thanks to its team of highly talented designers, Click Consult is also able to distil its vast experience into easy to understand visual content.

Follow us on [Google+](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#), or to find out what Click Consult can do for you, call:

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