



WRITING CONTENT FOR USER INTENT (AND GOOGLE)



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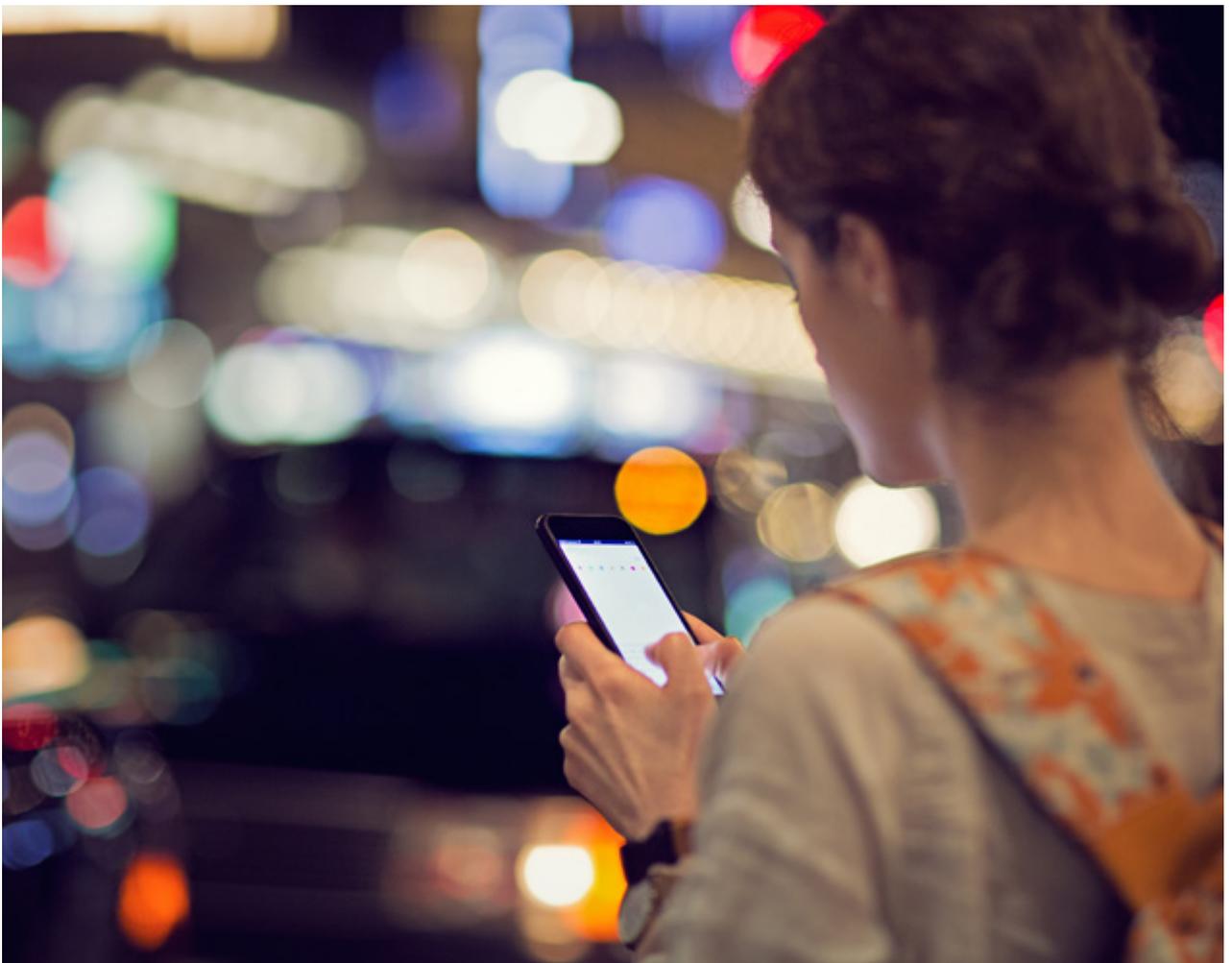
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INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult things about producing online content for a brand is determining its purpose. Content for content's sake can have detrimental impact if, for example, it dilutes the relevance signals the site provides the various algorithms that rank pages, while insufficient content can leave sites struggling to compete for relevant search terms.

While there is a wealth of tools available to search and digital marketing professionals, a suite of expensive tools is often not an option for start-ups and smaller brands. Search Console, and some of the other tools we'll mention in this eBook, however, are free to use and can deliver a lot of useful information – so much so that they remain vital to search professionals even when expensive tools are an option.

In this eBook, we're going to look at one specific aspect of Google Search Console– the Search Queries Report – and how it can assist marketers in analysing intent and in developing SEO friendly content. In addition, we'll cover a few other methods you can use to identify intent and generate content ideas to address it.



WHAT IS SEARCH CONSOLE?

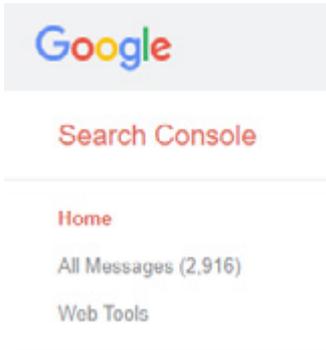
A free Google product, Search Console is a tool for webmasters, search professionals and anyone interested in their performance on the search engine results pages, which enables brands and individuals to monitor and maintain the search presence of the accounts they manage, optimise their presence, check for various errors in mark-up, accessibility and more.

WHAT IS A SEARCH TERM?

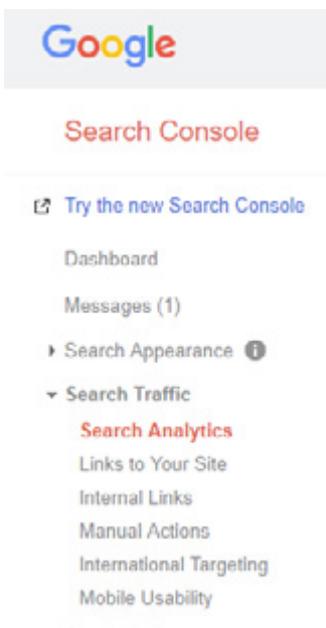
A search term is the word or phrase a user types or speaks to a search engine in order to find a product, service or information on the web.



HOW TO FIND SEARCH TERMS

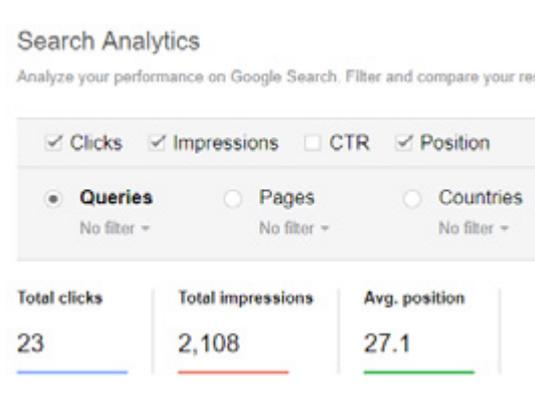


Firstly you'll need to log in to your Search Console and select the right site.



You'll then need expand the 'Search Analytics' menu and select 'Search Analytics'.

This will bring you to a page that looks like the below – giving you a number of ways to analyse your performance in search.



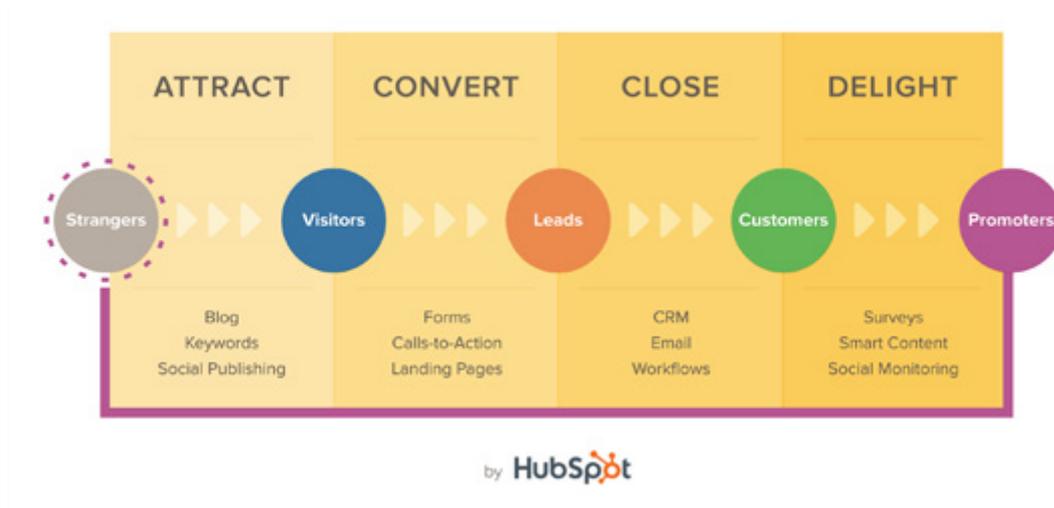
We're going to look at 'Queries', but there are a number of ways we can organise them.

- **Clicks** – shows you how many times your result has been clicked on for a particular term.
- **Impressions** – shows the total number of times a result of yours has been seen in search for the term.
- **Click through rate (CTR)** – the result of a sum which divides clicks by impressions.
- **Position** – where your site ranks for a particular search term

This page and the various filters offers a fantastic range of possible insights for your brand. Not only does it offer you a clear list of the search terms that are bringing people to your site, it can also tell you how well you're satisfying various terms. For example, CTR will show you how appealing your particular result is comparable to the competition. Are you getting a lot of impressions but a low CTR? It might be time to update your meta titles. Do you have a high click through, but low position? Maybe your page is sending the wrong signals to Google – something you could rectify, perhaps, by auditing the page's links and content, refining the copy to better meet the search term.

HOW TO USE QUERY REPORT TO UNDERSTAND USER INTENT

The purpose of finding intent is, primarily, to enable brands to offer an improved experience to consumers. While the ultimate goal is to have a visitor to your site convert in to a consumer, the auditing of intent is to identify areas where you can add value to the consumer, potentially influencing their decision making in the long run.



Your search query report from Search Console is an, albeit incomplete, list of queries for which your website is appearing. As stated in the previous chapter, this can be sorted in a variety of ways – one important one for searcher intent is simple alphabetical sorting. Below for example is some of the ‘Attract’ (if we follow Hubspot’s process above) level search queries:

964	what does it mean when you appear in searches in linkedin
965	what does keyword not provided mean in google analytics
966	what does seeing a hummingbird mean
967	what does weekly search appearances mean on linkedin
968	what is conversion rate optimization cro
969	what is link reclamation
970	what is ppc
971	what is pr in seo

Equally, the following – which fits again in to the first box – shows that users are searching for resources and blogs that will help them improve their search and digital marketing knowledge.

466	how to run twitter ads
467	how to search keywords on google
468	how to see keywords in google analytics
469	how to set up a google shopping campaign

Beside from being able to answer queries about the meaning of seeing a hummingbird (it's good luck, apparently), I know that for these queries we have some pretty in-depth blog content which answers the query.

The intent in these queries is to learn to master a specific technique, so we supply educational [blog content](#) (linking this to more extensive [resources and eBooks](#)). When examining your own brand's query report – it's important to identify where these terms are taking your consumers and whether those pages are adding value to their journey.

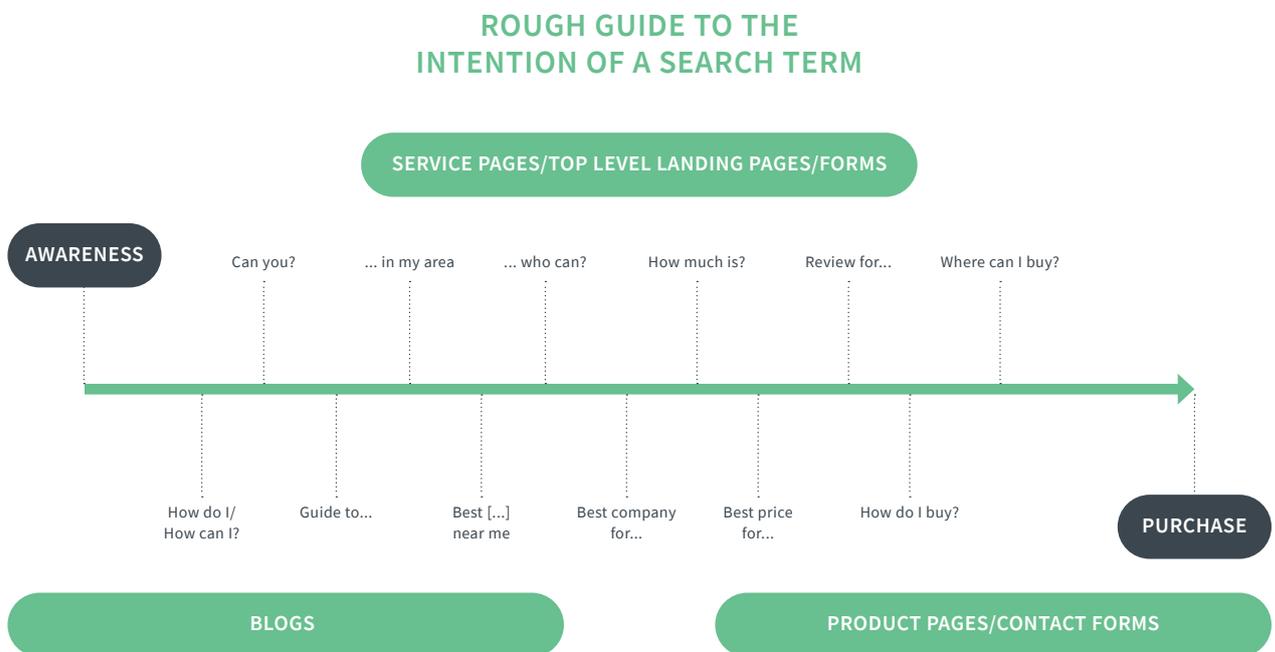
By ensuring your brand is there at the start, by addressing low-purchase intent, informational queries, you can begin the process of building a relationship with the consumer that can mature over time until they are purchase ready.



WHAT CONSTITUTES INTENTION?

While it's impossible to read the mind of each searcher, there are a few loose guidelines that you can look to use when judging the intent level of the queries you're appearing for. Look for active and passive search queries. While 'how do I?' is passive, some localised searches like '[your industry] in [region]' are further along the [buyer's journey](#).

Intent comes in all shapes and sizes – and it's important you're there for all of them with the right content. Judge the intent along a line between awareness and purchase. The previous diagram from Hubspot can give you some indication of what pages you need to place at which part of the journey, but you can use the diagram below as a guideline.



As the above rough guide shows, there is a continuum of intent – and it may be that the searches sometimes take place out of order (looking up how to guides after receiving a shock quotation, for example) – nevertheless, we can cater to all levels with pages set up to satisfy that particular query and, therefore, remain relevant to our users at all stages.

In this regard, making a note of all of the queries of this nature for which you appear that are listed in Search Console and plotting them on a line, you can see what kind of page you should be serving them comparative to what you are serving and make amends where necessary.

OTHER TOOLS

As promised, we're sticking to free tools here, though there are paid tools such as SEMrush, Searchmetrics and Ahrefs which will all provide you with keywords you rank for and have tools you can use for ideation. However, if you want to make the most of your options without spending your marketing budget, then the following two tools are great for helping you pad out your keyword list with terms from all points on the intent spectrum.

ANSWER THE PUBLIC

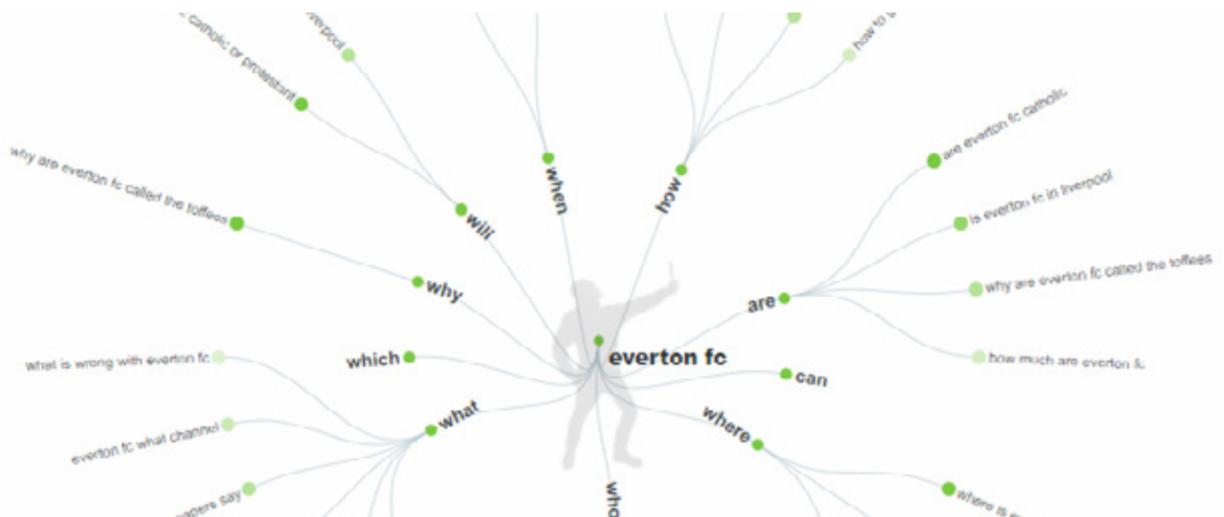
[Answer the public](#) is a free online tool (though with a more feature heavy premium option) which describes itself as:

"[A tool which] listens into autocomplete data from search engines like Google then quickly cranks out every useful phrase and question people are asking around your keyword."

"It's a goldmine of consumer insight you can use to create fresh, ultra-useful content, products and services. The kind your customers really want."

This description makes a better case for using it than I could, which is why I'm quoting it here – but the crux of the matter is that if you're looking for genuine search terms beyond those you already pitch for with your content, then it's a really good place to start.

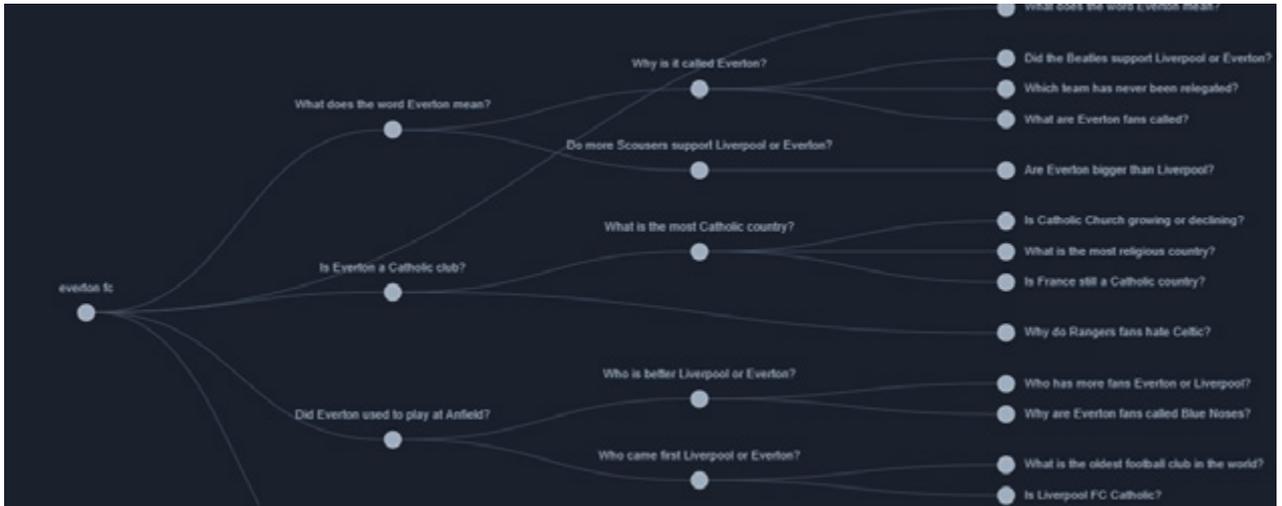
Take the below chart generated for the search term "everton fc":



Not only does it return the question that has historically been asked most of all by Everton's global fan base (what is wrong with everton fc) it also offers a number of commonly asked questions related to the club. The same kind of chart is returned for any query entered – and you will be presented with a wealth of genuine search terms that you can add to your list to categorise.

ALSO ASKED

[Also Asked](#) is a tool currently in its infancy – and began as a python coding project (one even managed to replicate, and which can be found [here](#)) – which scrapes the ‘People Also Asked’ questions from Google searches to return lists of related and semi related questions.



DEVELOP AN INTENT FOCUSED CONTENT PLAN

While someone smarter than me will no doubt be able to automate the process, the way to approach the creation of a content plan is tediously manual for the moment. What we need to do is use the method mentioned in the previous sections.

Once you've built a list of search terms, run them through Keyword Planner – while it's getting less accurate all the time, it will give an approximate volume for your keywords which you can use to prioritise the order you produce the content.

In order to identify gaps in the content you have at present, you can use site search: `yoursite.com "search term"` to see if it returns anything – obviously, there are ways you can do this with other search tools, but this approach, as slow as it is, is likely the best you'll get for free.

When you've whittled down your list of search terms to those you either do not appear for, or for which a page you're not happy with appears, you can set up a simple Excel or Google Sheet and begin entering the terms in to columns for each of the intent levels. Don't worry if your table has far more low intent keywords than purchase level – this is almost always going to be the case.

With the keywords added to their intent level, you can add another after each intent level with the search volume and order the search term column by volume to give you a rough running order for your plan.

PLANNING

The important thing here is that you want to ensure you're approaching each piece of content as a step in the journey. You don't want to be producing all of the low level intent pages for a year before moving on – all you would achieve is priming the consumer for a site that caters to the next level of intent. Instead you want to produce journeys – low intent blogs which lead to mid intent eBooks which lead to high intent specification comparison pages or product pages and set each journey live at the same time.

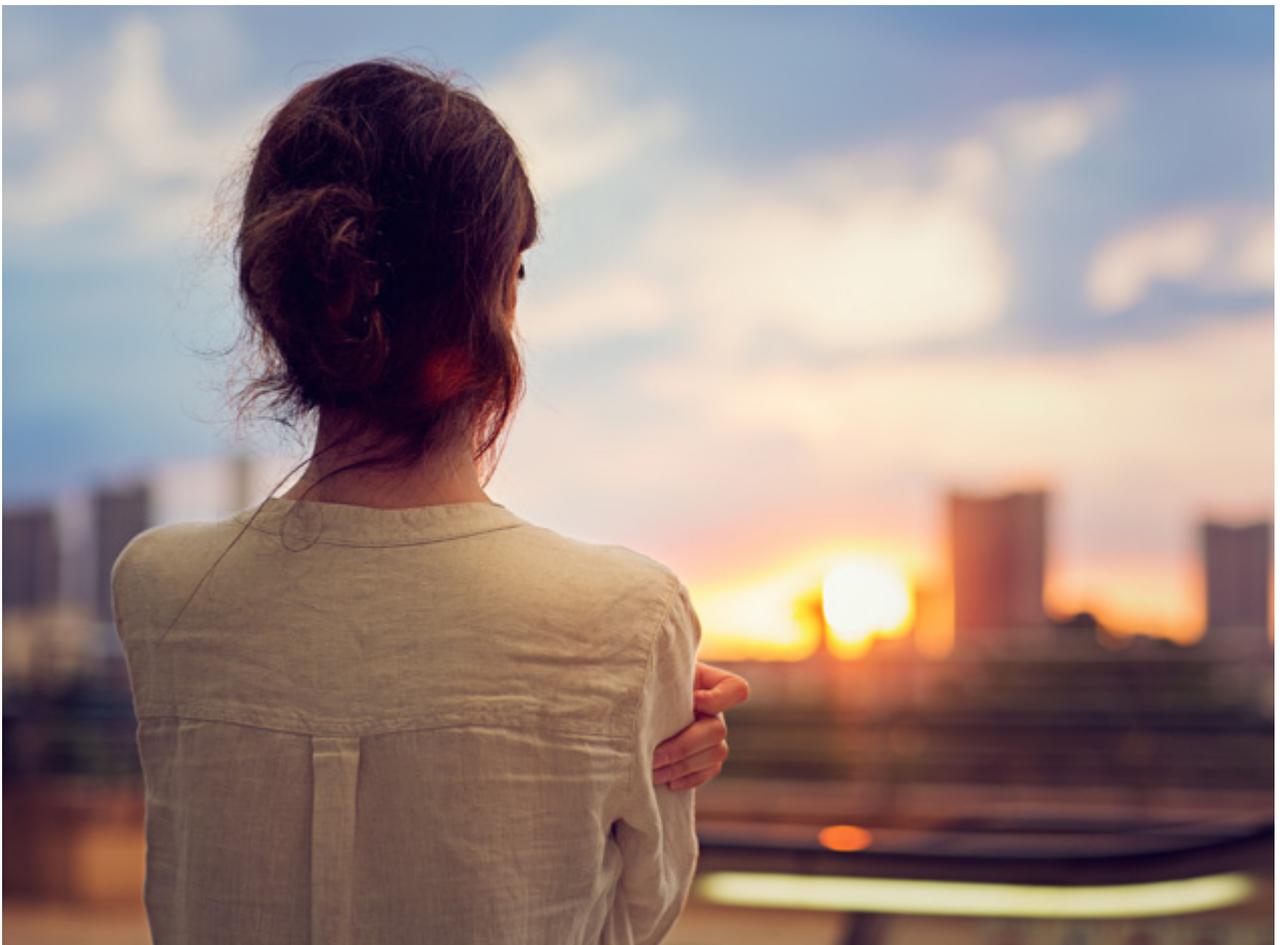
By creating these journeys you can be sure that you have considered their connectivity and their place in the continuum of intent, meaning that you'll almost always produce better connected, better flowing content from one piece to the next. Think of yourself as a tour guide – leading your consumer from their awareness of the problem all the way to the solution you're able to provide.

CONCLUSION

User intent can see a tough proposition, but the main issue is developing a list of genuine queries – after that, we can generally use a degree of common sense to categorise the levels of intent. However, using the tools mentioned and the technique outlined, we can not only identify this intent but set about creating content to address these different levels of intent.

While Search Console has changed a lot since it was Webmaster Tools, those changes have brought (for the most part) an increase in the functionality and the benefits of proper use. There is now a lot of information available in Search Console (including the option to retrieve sixteen months of data – which was added in mid-2018) making it as important for good search marketing as Google Ads and Google Analytics.

Using the search queries report can offer a wealth of insight in to what you are doing well, what you are doing less well and, indeed, what you aren't doing but should be. For that reason, you should be carrying out at least a quarterly review of the report – search changes all the time and, while it has changed, the way we search has not changed as much over the last two decades as it is likely to do in the next five years as voice search alters not only the way we search, but the way we phrase our searches.



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ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

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