Google Modifies Search Results Parameter, Affecting SEO Tools via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern



Google appears to have disabled or is testing the removal of the &num=100 URL parameter that shows 100 results per page.

Reports of the change began around September 10, and quickly spread through the SEO community as rank-tracking tools showed disruptions.

Google hasn't yet issued a public statement.

What's Happening

The &num=100 parameter has long been used to retrieve 100 results in one request.

Over the weekend, practitioners noticed that forcing 100 results often no longer works, and in earlier tests it worked

only intermittently, which suggested a rollout or experiment.

@tehseoowner reported on X:

> *Google has seemingly removed the ability to do &num=100, can anyone confirm?*
>
> *If you use the parameter, only 2 pages show. This "2 pages" filter has been tested for a year, but usually if you clicked to page 2 they have the rest the top 100. Now it shows nothing after page 2.*
>
> *— SEOwner (@tehseowner)* September 11, 2025

Keyword Insights wrote:

> *!! Google has killed the n=100 SERP parameter. Instead of 1 request for 100 SERP results, it now takes 10 requests (10x the cost). This impacts Keyword Insights' rankings module. We're reviewing options and will update the platform soon.*
>
> *— Keyword Insights (@keywordinsights)* September 14, 2025

Ripple Effects On Rank-Tracking Tools

Clark and others documented tools showing missing rankings or error states as the change landed.

Some platforms' search engine results page (SERP) screenshots and daily sensors briefly stalled or displayed data gaps.

Multiple SEO professionals saw sharp declines in desktop impressions in Google Search Console starting September 10, with average position increasing accordingly.

Clark's analysis connects the timing of those drops to the &num=100 change. He proposes that earlier desktop impression

spikes were partly inflated by bots from SEO and AI analytics tools loading pages with 100 results, which would register many more impressions than a normal 10-result page.

This is a community theory at this stage, not a confirmed Google explanation.

Re-Examining "The Great Decoupling"

Over the past year, many teams reported rising impressions without matching clicks and associated that pattern with AI Overviews.

Clark argues the &num=100 change, and the resulting tool disruptions, offer an alternate explanation for at least part of that decoupling, especially on desktop where most rank tracking happens.

This remains an interpretation until Google comments or provides new reporting filters.

What People Are Saying

Clark wrote about the shift after observing significant drops in desktop impressions across multiple accounts starting on September 10.

He wrote:

> *"… I'm seeing a noticeable decline in desktop impressions, resulting in a sharp increase in average position.*
>
> *"This is across many accounts that I have access to and seems to have started around September 10th when the change first begun."*

Keyword Insights said:

> *"Google has killed the n=100 SERP parameter. Instead of 1*

> *request for 100 SERP results, it now takes 10 requests (10x the cost). This impacts Keyword Insights' rankings module. We're reviewing options and will update the platform soon."*

Ryan Jones suggests:

> *"All of the AI tools scraping Google are going to result in the shutdown of most SEO tools. People are scraping so much, so aggressively for AI that Google is fighting back, and breaking all the SEO rank checkers and SERP scrapers in the process."*

Considerations For SEO teams

Take a closer look at recent Search Console trends.

If you noticed a spike in desktop impressions in late 2024 or early 2025 without clicks, some of those impressions may have been driven by bots. Use the week-over-week changes since September 10 as a new baseline and note any substantial changes in your reporting.

Check with your rank-tracking provider. Some tools are still working with pagination or alternative methods, while others have had gaps and are now fixing them.

Looking Ahead

Google has been reached out to for comment, but hasn't confirmed whether this is a temporary test or a permanent shift.

Tool vendors are already adapting, and the community is reevaluating how much of the 'great decoupling' story stemmed from methodology rather than user behavior.

We'll update if Google provides any guidance or if reporting

changes show up in Search Console.

Featured Image: Roman Samborskyi/Shutterstock

https://www.searchenginejournal.com/google-modifies-search-results-parameter-affecting-seo-tools/556080/