

Google Search Console Fails To Report Half Of All Search Queries via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

New research from ZipTie reveals an issue with Google Search Console.

The study indicates that approximately 50% of search queries driving traffic to websites never appear in GSC reports. This leaves marketers with incomplete data regarding their organic search performance.

The research was conducted by Tomasz Rudzki, co-founder of ZipTie. His tests show that Google Search Console consistently overlooks conversational searches. These are the natural language queries people use when interacting with voice assistants or AI chatbots.

Simple Tests Prove The Data Gap

Rudzki started with a basic experiment on his website.

For several days, he searched Google using the same conversational question from different devices and accounts. These searches directed traffic to his site, which he could verify through other analytics tools.

However, when he checked Google Search Console for these specific queries, he found nothing. **“Zero. Nada. Null,”** as Rudzki put it.

To confirm this wasn't isolated to his site, Rudzki asked 10 other SEO professionals to try the same test. All received identical results: their conversational queries were nowhere to be found in GSC data, even though the searches generated real traffic.

Search Volume May Affect Query Reporting

The research suggests that Google Search Console uses a minimum search volume threshold before it begins tracking queries. A search term may need to reach a certain number of searches before it appears in reports.

According to tests conducted by Rudzki's colleague Jakub Łanda, when queries finally become popular enough to track, historical data from before that point appears to vanish.

Consider how people might search for iPhone information:

- "What are the pros and cons of the iPhone 16?"
- "Should I buy the new iPhone or stick with Samsung?"
- "Compare iPhone 16 with Samsung S25"

Each question may receive only 10-15 searches per month individually. However, these variations combined could represent hundreds of searches about the same topic.

GSC often overlooks these low-volume variations, despite their significant combined impact.

Google Shows AI Answers But Hides the Queries

Here's the confusing part: Google clearly understands conversational queries. Rudzki analyzed 140,000 questions from People Also Asked data and found that Google shows AI

Overviews for 80% of these conversational searches.

Rudzki observed:

“So it seems Google is ready to show the AI answer on conversational queries. Yet, it struggles to report conversational queries in one of the most important tools in SEO’s and marketer’s toolkits.”

Why This Matters

When half of your search data is missing, strategic decisions turn into guesswork.

Content teams create articles based on keyword tools instead of genuine user questions. SEO professionals optimize for visible queries while overlooking valuable conversational searches that often go unreported.

Performance analysis becomes unreliable when pages appear to underperform in GSC but draw significant unreported traffic. Teams also lose the ability to identify emerging trends ahead of their competitors, as new topics only become apparent after they reach high search volumes.

What’s The Solution?

Acknowledge that GSC only shows part of the picture and adjust your strategy accordingly.

Switch from the Query tab to the Pages tab to identify which content drives traffic, regardless of the specific search terms used. Focus on creating comprehensive content that fully answers questions rather than targeting individual keywords.

Supplement GSC data with additional research methods to understand conversational search patterns. Consider how your users interact with an AI assistant, as that’s increasingly

how they search.

What This Means for the Future

The gap between how people search and the tools that track their searches is widening. Voice search is gaining popularity, with approximately 20% of individuals worldwide using it on a regular basis. AI tools are training users to ask detailed, conversational questions.

Until Google addresses these reporting gaps, successful SEO strategies will require multiple data sources and approaches that account for the invisible half of search traffic, which drives real results yet remains hidden from view.

The complete research and instructions to replicate these tests can be found in ZipTie's original report.

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