Google Search Console for small businesses [Video]

What's changed in the new Google Search Console? And how might those changes affect us?

In this article, contributor Mike Zima gives us a text / video combo showing us around the updated Search Console. Specifically we explore how these updates can be beneficial to small businesses.

Watch the nine minute video here, or read the text below.

Ps, he filmed it in Mallorca, Spain, so you really might want to check out the video.

[embedded content]

First, it was Google's mobile-first index. Now, it's the new Google Search Console.

These might seem like they're designed to make your life more difficult (or at least, more confusing). But in reality, these updates, especially the updated Search Console, can make your life as a small business owner easier.

Here we list the three important features in the update, how they work, and why they're great tools for small businesses to use in growing their search strategy.

The Performance Report

The most powerful section of the redesigned Search Console is the Search Performance Report, previously known as the Search Analytics section.

How it works

The Search Performance Report contains features that are similar to the old Search Analytics, which is helpful for those trying to make the change over to the new system. In fact, if you liked the functionality of Search Analytics, you'll love Search Performance.

Search Performance offers more long-term data than Search Analytics, showing you up to 16 months of search performance data for a more complete long-term analysis.

Like Search Analytics, you can overlay various performance metrics (total impressions, total clicks, average CTR, average position data, etc.) with one click. The difference is that you don't have to choose between filtering for a search query, search type, country, or device—you can look at all of them at the same time. The only downside is that you can only overlay two comparisons at once, for example, desktop vs. mobile.

Why it's good for you

If you need to see all of the necessary information in order to make an educated decision about your SEO strategy, this is the tool for you.

You can see your short-term and long-term performance at quadruple the previous range offered—allowing you to track campaigns through their entire life cycle and take action.

Better still, you won't have to jump between graphs to juggle information. It's all in one place and ready for you to begin

using.

In short, it’s hard to find a tool that will give you more insight into your search strategy.

The Index Coverage Report

The Index Coverage Report is a combination of the old Blocked Resources and Index Status sections.

How it works

The updated report is a great way to stay up-to-date on how your site URLs are indexed.

Let’s say you discover an issue with your URLs. Clicking on those error URLs will bring up page details and diagnostic tools.

Now, you probably have several teams that work on fixing a problem like this, right? Which means those teams have to have the correct information (not to mention, the same set of information!) at the right time in order to fix the issue and keep your site running with minimal disruption.

At the top of the report is a share button that allows you to send the diagnostic information to all the relevant team members who need it. This will create a shareable link, sort of like when you share a Google Doc.

Of course, you also need to be able to see when a problem has been resolved so you can know to move forward to the next item.

Plus, if the problem has been fixed, Google can update their index accordingly. The Index Coverage Report allows you to validate a fix. This signals to Google to crawl the page and reprocess the affected URLs at a high priority.

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Why it’s good for you

The Index Coverage Report is fantastic for small businesses because it’s a free and easy way to monitor how your site is performing in the Search Index. It helps you spot issues quickly, get information quickly to your team, and fix problems with minimal downtime.

With the Index Coverage Report, your site can perform better and faster and your team can stay on top of their game—no matter how big or small the problem is.

AMP Status

AMP Status, or Accelerated Mobile Pages Status, is a way for website owners to validate fixed AMP URLs.

How it works

In the former version of Google Search Console, you would get a list of AMP URLs with errors and recommended fixes, but you couldn’t request that Google process the repaired AMPs.

The new Search Console remedies this issue by allowing you to validate repaired URLs and request higher priority processing.

The Console will run several tests once you validate a fix to see if you’ve handled the problem properly and will let you know right away whether the page passes muster.

If it does, Google will go ahead and process the remaining pages. If it doesn’t, it will give you a notification and recommendations.

In addition, the new Console has an expanded validation log so you can see a list of all fixed URLs as well as URLs that failed validation or are still pending.

Why it’s good for you

This is good for your business because it helps you stay on top of your URLs. You can see exactly where the issue is and how to fix it, then you can take charge of it. You can share the information with your team, work on a solution, and verify that solution right away.

From there, you don’t have to wait to get indexed again. You can ask for priority processing to make sure your site starts performing as soon as possible. And that means you can spend less time worrying about your search strategy and more time putting it into action.

Ready to use the new Google Search Console?

The new Google Search Console is designed with your business needs in mind. Google’s developers took requests and feedback from businesses like yours to create a more robust Search Console than ever before.

We hope this article has given you more insight into the new Search Console and how you can take advantage of its features to see success in your own business.

Have any questions? Leave a comment below or on the video!

Mike is the Co-founder of Zima Media.

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implications.

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