Google SERP Layout Shift: Position 1 Now Appears Halfway Down The Page via @sejournal, @lorenbaker

Ranking #1 doesn’t mean what it used to.

In fact, 57% of organic position-one results sit above the fold on desktop, and only about 40% do on smartphone.

The takeaway from a guy who works at a rank-tracking company: rank alone is no longer enough.

Capper walked through your brand’s position from a pixel height lens, SERP result size, and SERP share of voice, and made the case that SEOs need to reframe their channel as brand impressions, not just clicks.

Watch the on-demand webinar right now & learn what mattered.

Position 1 Is Often Invisible. The Median Result Sits 635 Pixels Down.

Reaching position 10 takes about five full screens of scrolling.

On desktop, the median organic #1 result sits roughly 635 pixels from the top of the page, against a typical laptop viewport of about 800 pixels.

Position two is already, more often than not, below the fold.

The mobile picture is worse. “Nearly two thirds of the time or

three fifths of the time, the number one organic result is not visible at all, not even the first row of text on a typical smartphone," Capper said. "It's pretty horrendous, right?"

Where Position 1 Went: AI Overviews & Paid Are Above the Fold

Once organic gets pushed down, what replaces it depends entirely on intent.

On informational SERPs, AI Overviews consume nearly a third of above-the-fold visual space on their own. Add Knowledge Graph and the figure climbs to roughly 41%, two fifths of what users see before scrolling.

Commercial SERPs are even more lopsided. Paid plus shopping units occupy more than 60% of above-the-fold space, with Popular Products pushing past two-thirds in some categories. Organic gets about 16%.

Vertical matters enormously. Watch on-demand to learn what to focus on, by vertical.

Optimize for Result Screen Size, Not Just Rank

Capper's sharpest tactical reframe: stop prioritizing keywords by rank or volume alone, and start prioritizing by size.

A plain organic result is about 120 pixels tall. An organic listing with images, prices, and ratings (IPR) runs roughly 240 pixels, which is twice the visual footprint.

His Lord of the Rings analogy made it stick. When Gimli tells Legolas that taking down a tower-sized elephant "still only counts as one," he's obviously wrong.

Same in organic: a Brex Flowers listing with full rich results dwarfs a plain Trustpilot link beneath it. “Are you really going to say that this counts just as the same as the Trustpilot result? No, this is huge.”

Action item: Audit your top commercial keywords for IPR eligibility and prioritize schema work by pixel gain, not search volume.

Watch the on-demand webinar right now for access to the audit.

Brand Search Now Outranks Domain Authority as a Ranking Signal

Capper revived data from a presentation he gave nine years ago showing that branded search volume was a stronger predictor of organic rankings than Domain Authority. Run the same analysis today and the brand signal has only strengthened.

“Brand is getting stronger and stronger and stronger as a predictor of how you rank,” Capper said. “And again, how do you build your brand through SEO? You are visible.”

That creates a flywheel SEOs have under-pitched for years: visibility builds brand recognition, branded searches climb, rankings improve, visibility compounds. The point isn’t to abandon authority metrics, but to stop treating brand as a vague “awareness” outcome and start treating it as a measurable input to organic performance.

Learn what you should track right now, in the on-demand webinar.

Q&A: Most Helpful Questions from

the Webinar

Q: Any suggestions on how to sell visibility and pixels to senior leadership who are entrenched in share of voice and ranking?

Tom answered: Pixels are the easier sell because you can show side-by-side SERPs where the traditional metric says you win but the visual reality says you don’t. He recommends blending pixels into how share of voice is calculated, since share of voice was always supposed to be a visibility analog, and pixels measure that more honestly than rank does. The harder pitch is repositioning SEO as a brand channel, but Tom’s shortcut works: “If you have other channels that drive impressions, bring up those impressions data, put them next to the impressions that you’re generating… SEO is an incredible impressions channel.”

Q: Should we skip all the SERP optimization and just go right to optimizing for agents?

Tom answered: Not yet. Agents still need to decide which businesses to surface, and they do that using grounded LLMs that rely on SERPs underneath. “One way or another, this is coming back to the SERPs.” On top of that, Google search still dwarfs LLM interfaces by traffic volume. He noted an unverified stat he saw minutes before the webinar that AI Mode had hit roughly one million users, which is “staggeringly low when you consider Google’s overall user base.” Agent-only futures may come, but the underlying answering APIs will still be SERPs in machine-readable form.

Q: What are accessible ways to measure AEO/GEO visibility, since there's no equivalent of Search Console for LLMs?

Tom answered: Three things. First, track prompt-level brand visibility, but don't fall into the "I track 10,000 keywords but only 50 prompts" trap. LLM response variety demands a real sample size. Second, think in terms of topic volume, not prompt volume, since most specific prompts have a volume of one. Third, focus on mentions and recommendations rather than citations: "This is not ranked tracking… you are trying to be the tool or the product or the brand that is mentioned and recommended within the response." He also suggested server log analysis to see which pages LLM grounding bots are actually hitting.

Q: Is organic likely to keep getting worse, or will AI fatigue bring traditional search back?

Tom answered: It's not getting better, but the pace may slow. He pointed to Google I/O as evidence: Google held back from rolling AI Mode out broadly, suggesting internal nervousness about user readiness. AI Mode handles informational queries reasonably but struggles with navigational searches and specific result types like weather widgets. Both ChatGPT and AI Mode have also been adding more links over time, because users still want to reach websites. His honest take: "I don't think we're going back to where we were. I'm afraid I think ultimately people quite like having the answer asked for them."

Watch the Full Webinar

The full session, including Capper's SERP comparisons, vertical-level breakdowns, and the AI tracking framework, is

available on demand from Search Engine Journal. Watch it for the data, stay for the budget pitch.

https://www.searchenginejournal.com/updated-serps-new-study-measures-the-serp-in-pixels-not-ranks-recap/577359/