How to improve your SEO after Google's spot-zero-termination



It was January 22 when Google announced changes to the world of search engine optimization. The so-called "spot zero" in the featured snippets of search engine results pages (SERPs) stopped.

In other words, the URL of the featured snippet appears a single time in the SERP instead of serving with the snippet and its base position lower in the result.

The change is already having a significant impact on the number of clicks that featured snippets receive.

Digital marketing agency, 97th Floor conducted a study looking at almost 3000 high-volume SERPs that were affected by the spot-zero termination.

They've written a whitepaper to share practical tips on how to prioritize your SEO needs after Google's update, and have also provided a free STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Results) reporting template to help you strategize.

Here is how to get started.

Content produced in collaboration with 97th Floor.

1. Highlight the date of the change in your analytics platform

The first step is to make sure that you mark the date of January 22 in your analytics platform. It's the easiest way to keep track of all the changes that happen after Google's update.

You can also mark the date in other SEO tools that you're using to track your success with keywords and traffic to your site.

2. Exclude featured snippets from your new keyword research

According to 97th Floor's research, there was a significant drop in the number of clicks on featured snippets after the spot-zero termination. Thus, make sure you run new keyword research to explore new opportunities. This time, filter out featured snippets and "people also ask" boxes to find keywords that will earn more clicks.

3. Re-optimize your URLs to become featured snippets

97th Floor noticed that it now becomes easier for URLs at the front page of SERPs to turn into featured snippets. Up to now, most featured snippets were in spots 1-3 but now there is a shift that includes more SERPs from the first page.

This means that you might not necessarily need to aim for spot 1 or 2 to land a featured snippet. Spend some time on optimizing your URLs holding lower position keywords to

increase your chances of success.

4. Review your traffic coming from featured snippets

Google’s update has impacted the popular snippets that used to attract a high volume of site clicks. Thus, it’s not necessarily useful to aim for landing a featured snippet.

If you’ve noticed a drastic decline in your number of clicks, explore the idea of opting out of the featured snippets aiming for spot two instead.

5. Review your title tags

Now that the clicks are reduced, it’s more important than ever to work on your title tags. Aim for text that is more “clickable” without being misleading.

For example, if your brand is not popular, you can leave out its name from the title to focus on the content that will make your URL more clickable.

Double the time you are spending on optimization to review your SEO success.

6. Improve your meta descriptions

As with title tags, it’s crucial to pay attention to your meta descriptions to make your links more appealing.

It’s the best time to review your meta descriptions to explore how it can affect your clicks to your site.

7. Review your structured data mark-up

Featured snippets don’t make the only way to highlight your links. The structured data associated with your URLs can help you boost your performance in SERPs.

There are many mark-ups for your URLs and they vary based on the content:

- Customer reviews
- Event details
- Product pricing
- Recipe information
- Local business information
- Single Images or Carousels

8. De-optimize the featured snippet if needed

The best way to ‘deactivate’ the featured snippet from your link is to implement the “data-nosnippet” attribute to the HTTP of any page you want to de-optimize.

It’s safer to use this code instead of changing the copy as this could potentially affect your ranking.

9. Communicate the changes

Don’t forget to update your boss or client about the latest changes. Communication can make your job easier both in the short and long term.

Educating your clients can also help you get buy-in for long-term action plans that are clear on the implications of any changes coming from Google.

Start by presenting the situation, how you're going to address it and the next actions.

This article only provides a flavor of the actionable recommendations in 97th Floor's whitepaper. Download 'The 10 Actions SEOs Need to Take Following Google's Spot-Zero-Termination' for a more in-depth view, as well as their free STAR reporting template.

More about:

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