

How to track free Shopping traffic from Surfaces across Google [Video]

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Surfaces across Google enables merchants to display their product listings for free in Google Search, Google Images, the Shopping tab, Google Maps and Google Lens. Google Merchant Center reports click data from free listings, but that's it. During our Google Shopping session of Live with Search Engine Land, ZATO Marketing's Kirk Williams and Smarter Ecommerce's Mike Ryan discussed how to track free product listing traffic in Google Analytics.

Related: FAQ: All about Google Shopping's free and paid product listings

Without tracking, Surfaces across Google traffic will show up as google/organic in Google Analytics. With a bit of work, you can segment it, though. "All you do is you go into Feed Rules in Google Merchant Center to append your new UTM parameters," said Williams, who quickly came up with a solution to track visits from Surfaces across Google listings in Google Analytics.

To get started, create the UTM parameters to add to your feed that will distinguish this traffic in your reporting. Google Analytics' Campaign URL Builder can help.

The next step is to append the new UTM parameters to your products' links using Google Merchant Center's Feed Rules. Once this has been added and saved, you'll need to re-process your feed.

Clicks on Shopping ads will continue to be tracked normally as long as you don't have UTM tracking set to override auto-

tagging in Google Analytics. “Make sure that you’re not allowing your UTM parameters to override Google’s auto-tagging, otherwise when [users] do click through, even on Shopping Ads, it’ll come through as Google Surfaces traffic,” Williams said. To do this, verify that your Google Ads account is set to auto-tag and that the “manual tagging (UTM values) to override auto-tagging” option in Google Analytics’ property settings remains unchecked. Merchants using third-party tracking software likely will not be able to take advantage of this solution, Williams said.

Why we care. Although clicks for unpaid Shopping listings are already tracked in Google Merchant Center, routing this information through Google Analytics enables merchants to track user behavior after the click. This provides merchants with more data on how users are interacting with their sites, which can be used to inform their marketing strategies.

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