That’s a Wrap: MozCon Virtual 2020 Day Two Recap

Wow! What a crazy ride MozCon has been this year. In case you missed it, we were able to double the number of attendees and include over 2,800 people.

Not only were we able to include them, we were also able to see their families, pets, and home offices. It was an unusual experience for sure, but one we won’t be forgetting any time soon.

As always, the speakers served up some flaming hot content (including an actual movie). We can’t wait to share some of these takeaways with you!

Britney Muller – Accessible Machine Learning Workflows for SEOs

Britney started off by assuring everyone that they absolutely *can* use machine learning. She knows this because she was able to teach her dad how to use it!

Let’s jump right in.

Basically, machine learning can be used for a lot of things.

> *There’s endless possibilities w/ #machinelearning:*
>
> *Some cool things:*
> *– AI-generated faces*
> *– Auto-excuse generator (need that)*
>
> *Leveraging for SEO:*

– Keyword research
– Forecasting time series
– Extracting entities and categories from URLs
– Internal link analysis
#mozcon

– Seer Interactive (@SeerInteractive) July 15, 2020

Britney suggests starting with a notebook in Colaboratory for increased accessibility. She showed us to do the basics like upload, import, and download data before jumping into the fun stuff:

- Using Google NLP API to extract entities and their categories from URL
- Using Facebook's Prophet data for time-series predictions
- Keyword research using Search Console Data and a filtering function

Honestly, we were surprised at how easy she made machine learning look. Can't wait to try it ourselves!

Izzi Smith – How to Be Ahead of the (CTR) Curve

Not all clicks are created equal! While you may want as many clicks as possible from the SERP, there's a specific type of click you should be striving for – the almighty long click.

"What is a click without the intent to be there?"

Google's patent clearly states that reactions to search results are gauged, and short interactions (clicks) can lower rankings while longer interactions (clicks) can lead to higher rankings.

Great point by the wonderful @izzionfire – focus on the "long

> *clicks” – the ones where users spend a long time on your page after clicking your result.*
>
> *Google tends to show answers for the “short clicks” within the SERP – if it doesn’t now, it will soon.#MozCon pic.twitter.com/mCvWUpDTKQ*
>
> *– Lily Ray ???? (@lilyraynyc) July 15, 2020*

Are you ready to track your clicks and get to work? Good! Izzi broke it all down for you:

1. Pull your data from Google Search Console, specifically by using their API.
2. Know what you are looking for BEFORE getting into the data.
3. Look for these patterns:
    1. Performance-based core update impacts – decrease in positions and impressions
    2. Identifying Irrelevant rankings – large impression spike (with low CTR) then a sharp decline in impressions
    3. Losing SERP feature – a sharp decrease in CTR and a decrease in impressions

Izzi, you’re a rockstar! We can’t wait to go play with all of our data later.

Flavilla Fongang – How to Go Beyond Marketing for Clients: The Value of a Thriving Brand Ecosystem

Flavilla is a true gem. Instead of focusing on the top of the funnel, she focused on how we can keep customers coming back.

She told us that “business is like love”. You don’t want to move too fast. You don’t want to move too slow. You have to

add value. You have to keep things exciting.

> *“Your clients don’t continue buying from you because you meet their expectations. They do it because you EXCEED them.” It’s like falling in love. — @FlavillaFongang #MozCon pic.twitter.com/S4RwlkC6pp*
>
> *— Sarah Bird (@SarahBird) July 15, 2020*

Flavilla challenged us to find what makes us remarkable:

- Can you offer a unique experience?
- Can you create a community?
- Can you offer integrations?
- Can you partner with people to bring something new?

Really sit down and think about why you started your brand and reflect on it. If you build a brand people come back to, you’ll have far less to worry about.

Brian Dean – How to Promote Your Content Like a Boss

We finally did it! We got Brian Dean to speak at an SEO conference.

If you don’t know him by now, you haven’t been searching hard enough. Brian is a master of content creation and marketing.

It wasn’t always that way, though. Brian’s first blog never took off because he spent more time creating content than he did promoting it. Once he realized just how important promotion was, he went all-in and ended up reaping the benefits.

This year, he finally shared with us some of his Jedi-like promotion tactics.

> *7 promotional strategies*
> *1. Create for the linkerati (bloggers+journalists)*
> *2. Expanded social posts*
> *3. Avoid JarJar outreach*
> *4. The Jedi mind trick*
> *5. Hyperdrive-boosted Facebook posts*
> *6. Infiltrate scarif: subreddits*
> *7. Hack the Halonet: click to tweet links@backlinko #mozcon*
>
> *— James Wirth (@jameswirth) July 15, 2020*

He shared multiple tips for each of these strategies, but here is a quick summary:

- Social sites hate it when you post links. Instead, tease the content with a "hook, lead, summary, link, call-to-action".
- Ask journalists or bloggers if they'd be interested in reading your pieces, but do so before you publish it to take some pressure off.
- Actually personalize your outreach by mentioning something on the contact's site.
- Boost Facebook posts with ample engagement to audiences who have interacted with previous posts.

Just implementing one of these tactics could change the way your content is received by the internet. Who knows what could happen if you implemented all of them?

Joy Hawkins – Google My Business: Battling Bad Info & Safeguarding Your Search Strategy

Not everyone does local SEO, but if you do (or if it ties into what you do at all) you're going to want to buckle your seatbelt.

Joy showed us some of the insights she was able to pull from a large study she did with her team. They had noticed a major discrepancy in the data between Google My Business and Google Search Console, and wanted to get to the root of it.

> *TL;DR version of @JoyanneHawkins presentation at #mozcon*
>
> *Don't trust Search Console impressions, y'all*
>
> *— Greg Gifford (@GregGifford) July 15, 2020*

Joy shared some major findings:

1. Google My Business "views" are a lot of different things (not just the traditional impressions we're used to tracking).
2. Mobile searches don't show website icons in the local pack.
3. The search queries that show up in GMB are different from the ones that are shown in Search Console.
4. Explicit intent does not always mean higher intent than implicit intent

If you work in local search, Joy wants to challenge you to move away from views and Search Console impressions. Instead, focus on the search data that GMB provides for keywords and on click data in Search Console.

Michael King – Runtime: The 3-Ring Circus of Technical SEO

In true Michael King style (with a ton of flare), he showed us just what's possible at a virtual conference and blew our minds with technical SEO awesomeness.

> *That moment you think you kinda know technical SEO and then you see @iPullRank at #MozCon. Mind. BLOWN.*

> — Lauren Turner (@laurentracy_) July 15, 2020

We watched “Jamie” get through the three rings using slick techniques.

> How do you identify which keyword on a site owns a URL?
> -Position
> -Traffic
> -Linking authority metrics
>
> Use on all ranking pages to determine best URL for each keyword on the site, then adjust anchor text as needed@iPullRank #MozCon
>
> — Jennifer Slegg (@jenstar) July 15, 2020

> All Google products have services you can connect to via ABScript — you can create a full data ecosystem, all via basic JavaScript@iPullRank #MozCon
>
> — Ruth Burr Reedy (@ruthburr) July 15, 2020

> @ipullrank #seo #mozcon #techseo
>
> holy fizzle Ebay builds internal links programatically to boost rankings from page 2 to page 1.
>
> — Noah Learner (@noahlearner) July 15, 2020

There were so many of these, friends!

The thing is, all of this has been out there and accessible, but as Mike says in *Runtime*, “Doing things the same way everyone else does them is going to get you everyone else’s results. Do things your own way.”

Dana DiTomaso – Red Flags: Use a Discovery Process to Go from Red Flags to Green Lights

The idea of discovery is not a new one, but Dana came ready to shine a new light on an old tactic. Most of us do minimal research before agreeing to do a project – or at least minimal compared to Dana and her team!

These are just a few questions from Kick Point's discovery process:

- If there were no limitations, what would you want to be able to say at the end of this project?
- Which of these metrics affects your performance report?
- What does your best day ever look like?
- What didn't work last time?

The discovery process isn't just about talking to the client, though, it's about doing your own research to see if you can find the pain points.

> *Actually testing your client's transaction process.*
> *I only do that when setting up eCommerce tracking and test the purchasing journey for customers.*
>
> *Go beyond what data implies and see for yourself how you stack up to your competitors.*
> *Brilliant @danaditomaso #MozCon pic.twitter.com/dkz21fK1kd*
>
> *– nikrangerseo (@nikrangerseo) July 15, 2020*

As always, Dana shared some true gems that are sure to make our industry better.

David Sottimano – Everyday Automation for Marketers

David brought us automation greatness all the way from Colombia! There were so many practical applications and all of them required little to no coding:

- Wit.ai for search intent classification
- Using cron for scheduling things like scraping
- Webhooks for passing data
- Creating your own IFTTT-like automation using n8n.io on Heroku

We got to see live demonstrations of David doing each of these things as he explained them. They all seemed super user-friendly and we can't wait to try some of them.

> *#mozcon @dsottimano dropping a ton of automation knowledge and showcasing @bigmlcom power pic.twitter.com/p3gWVBbWX5*
>
> *— John Murch (@johnmurch) July 15, 2020*

Oh yeah, David also helped us build and release the Moz API for Sheets!

Russ Jones – I Wanna Be Rich: Making Your Consultancy Profitable

Most businesses fail within their first five years, and that failure often comes down to business decisions. Now, Russ doesn't enjoy all of this decision-making, but he has learned a few things from doing it and then seeing how those decisions affect a business's bottom line.

The number one way to become more profitable is to cut costs. Russ looked at cutting costs by having fewer full-time employees, renting/owning less space, making leadership

changes, and cutting lines of service.

When it comes to actually bringing in more money though, Russ suggests:

- Adding new service lines
- Raising prices
- Automating tasks
- Acquiring new business

At the end of the day, Russ boiled it down to two things: Don't be afraid to change, and experiment when you can – not when you must.

> *If you experiment only when you have to, you're going to fail. If you experiment now, when you can and don't wait until you must, chances are you're going to grow, succeed and beat out your competitors. @rjonesx #MozCon*
>
> *– Amy merrill (@MissAmyMerrill) July 15, 2020*

Heather Physioc – Competitive Advantage in a Commoditized Industry

SEO is not dead, it's commoditized. A strong line to start off a presentation! We can always count on Heather to bring forth some real business-minded takeaways.

First, she helped us understand what a competitive advantage actually is.

> *Competitive advantages should be:*
> *– Unique*
> *– Defensible*
> *– Sustainable*
> *– Valuable*

> *Consistent@HeatherPhysioc #MozCon*
>
> *— Melina Beeston (@mkbeesto) July 15, 2020*

Then, it was time to go through her competitive advantage framework.

> *Steps to having a competitive advantage (not just linear though – it's a cyclical process) via @HeatherPhysioc #Mozcon pic.twitter.com/W0ZBAduKHP*
>
> *— Alan Bleiweiss (@AlanBleiweiss) July 15, 2020*

As we went through this framework, Heather assigned A LOT of homework:

- Examine your brand: What do you do? Who do you serve? Why? Find the patterns within the answers.
- Write a brand statement.
- Activate your advantage: How can you live it fully? What things can't you do in support of your purpose? How will you know you're putting it to work?

She mentioned a lot of great tools throughout her presentation. Get a list of those tools and access to her slides here.

Wil Reynolds – The CMO Role Has Been Disrupted: Are You Ready for Your New Boss?

Have you ever thought about who holds the fate of the CMO in their hands? Wil started out by explaining that the CEO, CFO, and CIO actually have far more power over marketing than we give them credit for. While they all know that data is what will make their businesses successful, they also hold keys to our success: budget, IT teams/implementations, veto authority.

The issue we face isn't that we don't know what we are doing, but more so that we don't know how to communicate it.

> *"I don't know a whole lot of CEOs that read Search Engine Land, but they're the ones that write our checks." — @wilreynolds*
>
> *So instead of throwing shade at our least-favorite phrases the c-suite uses, we may want to make sure non-SEOs understand our value.#MozCon pic.twitter.com/S6fClFevZo*
>
> *— James Wirth (@jameswirth) July 15, 2020*

How can you show up to talk the talk and walk the walk? Use your data, and use it to give the customers a voice at the table (something all executive teams are attempting to achieve).

> *SEO + PPC + Analytics + CRM = magic@wilreynolds #mozcon pic.twitter.com/JICfWiOB3X*
>
> *— Jason Dodge (@dodgejd) July 15, 2020*

Wil's team has done an amazing job simplifying and documenting this process for all of us in search. If you haven't yet, we highly suggest checking out their blog.

That's a wrap

Folks, this was fun. We're so happy that we could bring people together from all over the world for two days during this crazy time.

While there weren't any Roger hugs or fist pumps, there were still lessons learned and friendships made. It doesn't get any better than that. We hope you feel the same.

If you were able to attend the live conference, we would love to hear your thoughts and takeaways! Be sure to take time to

reflect on what you've learned and start plans for implementation – we want to see you make a difference with your new knowledge.

Until next year, Moz fans!

https://tracking.feedpress.com/link/9375/13725526/mozcon-virtual-day-two-recap