GOOGLE'S ALGORITHMS IN SIMPLE TERMS

Ultimate Cheat Sheet to Google's Algorithmic Changes
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GOOGLE'S 9 ALGORITHMS

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GOOGLE ALGORITHM UPDATES

HERE ARE THE INS AND OUTS OF ALL 8

Each year, Google makes algorithmic changes 500-600 times per year. However, there are EIGHT that seriously shook up the Search Engine Results Page (SERP). This cheat sheet is designed to help you better position your digital documents - to align with Google's algorithms, in order to get you found.
SOMETHING TO REMEMBER:

In a crowded marketplace, fitting in is a failure. In a busy marketplace, not standing out is being invisible.

- SETH GODIN
The stated purpose of the Google Panda algorithm update was to reward high-quality websites and diminish the presence of low-quality websites in Google’s organic search engine results.

**WHAT IT DOES**

Panda assigns a "score" to web-pages. This score determines how a page is ranked. Lower the score the poorer ranking of a page.

**HOW TO RESOLVE**

Run routine site checks for content duplication, weak content, and keyword overkill. Use a site crawler. Here are a few from which to choose.

Use original content; photos, videos, text whenever you can. Hire photographer. Create own images in Canva, using stock photos purchased from 123rf.com.
2.0 PENGUIN

RELEASED APR 2012

Penguin's objective is to down rank sites whose links it deems are manipulative.

WHAT IT DOES

Penguin was designed to seek websites that contained link schemes and keyword stuffing.

HOW TO RESOLVE

Run routine audits with a backlink checker like SEO Spyglass. Look for unusual spikes. Check for penalties by going to the "Linking Domains" dashboard. Select "Link Penalty Risks" tab, select those links, then click "Update Penalty Risk."
Anything with a score over 50% should be looked into and resolved.
Hummingbird helps Google to better perform search queries by interpreting the users intent. Rather than just focus on keywords, Hummingbird groups phrases. This helps more with natural language processing than relying solely on semantic indexing.

**HOW TO RESOLVE**

Expand your keyword research to focus on phrases and concepts, not just keywords. Search related terms to find words that are synonymous and contain co-occurring terminology. Great source to perform your due diligence is RankTracker's Keyword Search tool.

These insights are great for understanding your targeted audience search better and diversifying your content.
4.0 PIGEON

RELEASED DEC 2014

Pigeon impacts searches in which a user's location plays a key role. The purpose of this algorithm is to geo-target to offer better local search results.

HOW TO RESOLVE

Focus more on on and off-page search. Use an on-page WebsiteAuditor to get a good idea about the aspects of your on-page elements that need more focus.

For off-page improvement, get your pages listed on as many directories as possible. Backlinks will get your site ranked. Use Alexa's Backlinking tools to get started.
5.0 MOBILE
RELEASED APR 2015

This update essentially forced ALL websites to offer mobile versions. Mobile friendly pages rank. Those that are not, don't.

HOW TO RESOLVE

You absolutely must have a website that is mobile friendly. This means that all of your pages conform and are responsive to mobile layout.

Use Google's mobile friendly test found in the WebSite Auditor. Find what you are looking for in Content > Analysis > Page Audit under the Technical factors tab.
AI TECHNOLOGY IS NOW DETERMINING SEARCH RESULTS

RackBrain is part of Google's Hummingbird algorithm. RackBrain is a machine learning system that uses artificial intelligence to improve search results and interpret new queries.

Essentially, the RackBrain system takes difficult or hard-to-understand queries and relates them to previous searches based on intent and end results.

HOW TO RESOLVE

Post-RackBrain, SEOs need to determine the type of content that best serves users’ needs. If your content doesn’t match up to the user experience, you can kiss your rankings goodbye.

1. Research the intent behind every keyword.
2. Craft long form, relevant content for each keyword.
7.0 POSSUM
RELEASED SEP 2016

Possum ensures that local results vary more on the internet user's location. The closer an online user is to a business related to their search query.

HOW TO RESOLVE
Extend your keyword list to location specific ranking. Improving your overall Local SEO (including your Domain Authority, links, content, the accuracy and spread of your citations, and the number of your native Google reviews) could help to “convince” Google that if they are only going to show one business in your category and building, it should be yours.
Fred targets websites that violate Google's guidelines. Websites that are blogs with low quality posts and appear to be created for the sole purpose of generating ad revenue and hyperlinking are most impacted by this.

**WHAT IT DOES**

**HOW TO RESOLVE**

Keep Google Search Quality Guidelines handy whenever you are creating a digital document. If your page includes ads, make sure that it contains high quality, and relevant content. Ample amounts of it.
9.0 BERT

RELEASED OCT 2019

Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) will help computers understand language a bit more like humans do. BERT models can therefore consider the full context of a word by looking at the words that come before and after keywords, rather than as stand-alone words.

HOW TO RESOLVE

Whereas BERT is essentially snippet focused. Make sure your snippet is written in such a way as you want BERT to find your content. It’s important to understand that BERT analyzes search queries, not the content on a page. BERT will work best for longer, more conversational queries - and in many ways, that’s how Google would really like users to search these days. So, while there’s not much you can do to optimize for BERT directly, it does means you should double-down on your efforts to create relevant, quality content.
Search query results BEFORE and AFTER BERT.
In addition to understanding Google's ever-changing algorithms, I am attaching the ever-useful SEO periodic table.
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We hope you enjoyed this cheat sheet prepared to help you navigate through the challenges of SERP. Should you wish to delve deeper into this subject matter, please use the contact information provided so we can discuss your SEO goals and needs.

MAILING ADDRESS
428 Main Street, Medfield MA 02052

PHONE NUMBER
617.606.1448

EMAIL ADDRESS
nicole@invoke-media.com