



Digital**FIX**

Google Search Console

Take Control Of How Google
Displays Your Website

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What is SEO?

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation. It's the process of increasing the number of visitors by improving the visibility of your website on search engine results pages.

The benefits of appearing high-up in the results are obvious. We don't need to tell you the impact it can have on your business because, let's face it, you already search for products and services online. Everyone does.

Before you start concerning yourself with where and what you want to appear for in the SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages) you need to make sure your site can be found.

How Search Engines Work

Search engines (e.g. Google) are like libraries but instead of books, they store websites.

Like any good library, there's an index. When you type a search query into a search engine it looks at the index and returns the most relevant results.

To do this it uses a computer programme called an algorithm.

Search engines have three primary functions:

- **Crawl** - Robots (known as crawlers or spiders) scour the Internet looking for content.
- **Index** - The content found through crawling is stored and organised.
- **Rank** - Indexed content is ordered by most relevant to least relevant.



First show up!

If your site can't be found it won't show up in the SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages).

Check to see how many of your pages have been crawled and indexed by visiting Google and typing in **site:yourdomain.com**. Change 'yourdomain.com' for the address of your website.

If you don't show up in the results, there could be a number of possible reasons.

- Your site is brand new and hasn't been crawled yet.
- Your site has been issued a penalty by Google for breaking the terms of service.
- Your site has technical issues that prevent robots from crawling your content.

In this guide we'll concentrate on appearing on Google as it is the biggest 'library' out there and it has the most reliable algorithm.

If you searched 'site:yourdomain.com' and you don't see important pages, or if there pages you don't want to show up, there's a free-to-use tool that gives you control.

Take Control of The Index

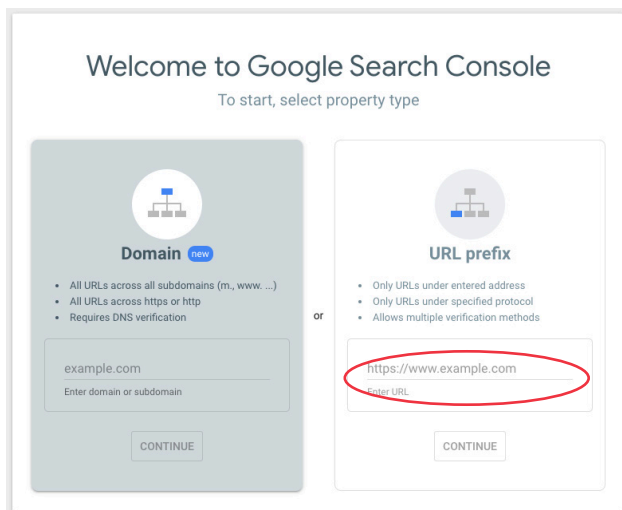
Previously Google Webmaster Tools, Google Search Console gives you lots of information about your website and help you to optimise your content on Google Search.

It does this by:

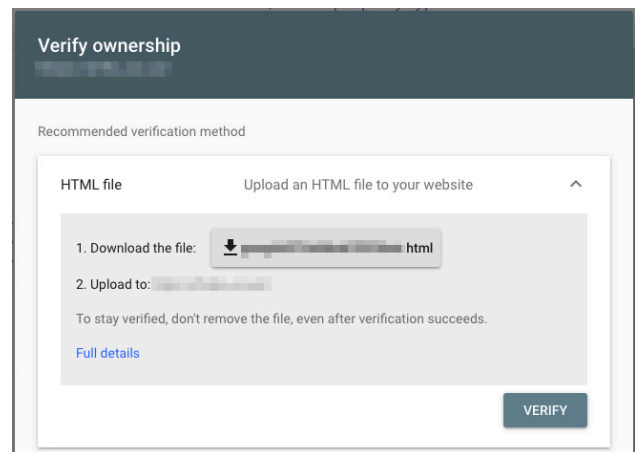
- Showing you which search queries brought people to your website.
- Allowing you to submit new content and remove unwanted content from the index.
- Alerting you to issues that are preventing your site from showing up.

Getting Started

To get started, visit search.google.com/search-console and click 'Start now'.



1 Once you're logged in, you'll be asked to add your site (property). Add the URL (full address of your website) in the space under 'URL Prefix' and click 'Continue'.



2 You'll be asked to verify your ownership. Google won't hand sensitive information over to just anybody!

Once you've added verification to your site 'Verify' to continue.



TIP - There are a number of ways to verify your site.

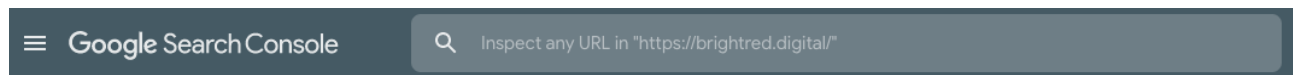
If you're unable to verify your site using the methods outlined by Google many popular SEO plugins offer site verification functionality. If you're using WordPress we recommend **Yoast**.

Once you're in, you'll find all the data you need to drive more traffic through search. But using can be complicated. To avoid becoming overwhelmed, here's an explanation of the basic tools.

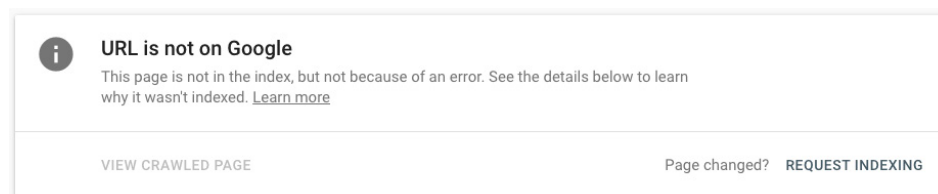
The Basic Tools

URL Inspection

Enter the URL of a page on your site (copy and paste the address) into the the search bar at the top of Search Console to compare the page in Google's index with the page as it appears on your site.

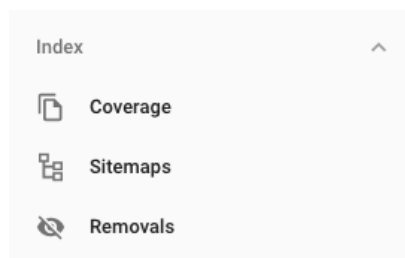


Google will search the index for the page. If it finds data for the URL, you can click '**View Crawled Page**' to view the page as it appears on Google's results pages.



If a URL isn't in the index, you can add it here. Click '**Request Indexing**' to start the automated process.

Whenever you create new content (i.e a blog post) or if you've updated content you can keep the index up-to-date by submitting and re-submitting your pages here.



Index

From the navigation on the left hand side of the dashboard you'll find the index options.

- **Coverage** – Shows you how many pages are in Google's index. It also shows you how many have been excluded and how many have errors or warnings that prevent Google from indexing.

To avoid having to regularly check for errors, notifications will be sent via email. When you receive an email you can use this area to check the error in more detail.

- **Sitemaps** – A sitemap is like a roadmap to all important places on your website. If you have a WordPress website there are free plugins (e.g. Yoast) that can create a sitemap for you. If you can't (or don't want to) use a plugin, you can create a sitemap online at www.xml-sitemaps.com.
- **Removals** – To request content is removed from the index simply submit the URL here.

When deciding which of your pages to index, *keep it concise!*

Imagine a supermarket. You're used to seeing signs for the important things that people are searching for. You don't see signs that say 'Staff Room' or 'Cleaning Closet'. The index for your site should follow the same principal.

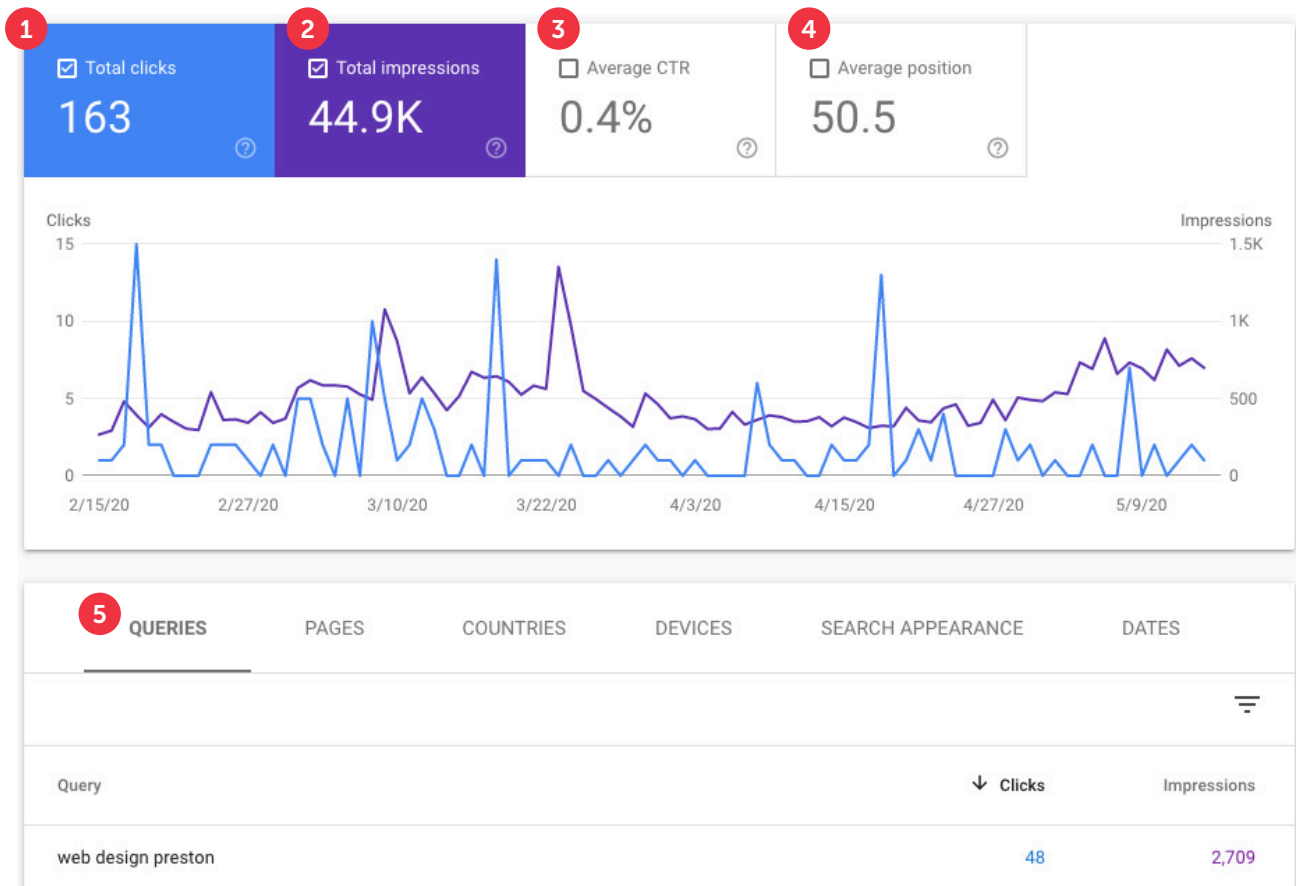
If you concentrate your efforts on appearing for the things people are likely to be interested in, you'll find it easier to manage and Google will love you for it!



Search Performance

Now that you understand how to control the index, Google Search Console also provides useful information about your site's performance.

One of the most commonly asked questions that we hear is 'How do we know how what people were searching for when they found us?'. The performance tab will show you this information and much more.



- 1** How often people clicked through to your site from Google.
- 2** How often your site has appeared in the search results.
- 3** The number of people who saw your listing and clicked the link.
- 4** The average position (rank) for all of your pages on Google.
- 5** Filter results by the search terms (queries) visitors used to find you as well as the pages they landed on, the country they visited from and the device they used when searching.

Improving Performance

All of this information is valuable to your decision making when it comes to optimising your content for search.

By understanding how visitors are finding your content, you can start to think about how you may improve your content to ensure that you're directing them in the best way possible.

You can also start to 'think like your customer' and organise your content to improve their experience

Summary

Google's Search Console allows you, the site owner, to take charge of how your content is 'served up' in the results pages. It's an invaluable resource that needs regular maintenance to show your brand in the best light possible.

As you get used to Search Console, you'll find there's more you can do to enhance your site's performance, all of which will prove to be useful. But for now, stick to the basics outlined in this guide to avoid becoming overwhelmed.

Some of the data you'll find in the 'Performance' section can't be accessed elsewhere. It's really valuable information that should influence the decisions you make when it comes to improving SEO.

Free Strategy Reviews

Don't struggle on in silence. To help small businesses power-up their online presence we're offering free one-hour consultations over the phone or via video chat, whichever you prefer.

We'll answer any of your Search Console questions as well as anything else you'd like to discuss about your online goals.

Visit brightred.digital/digital-fix to get started.